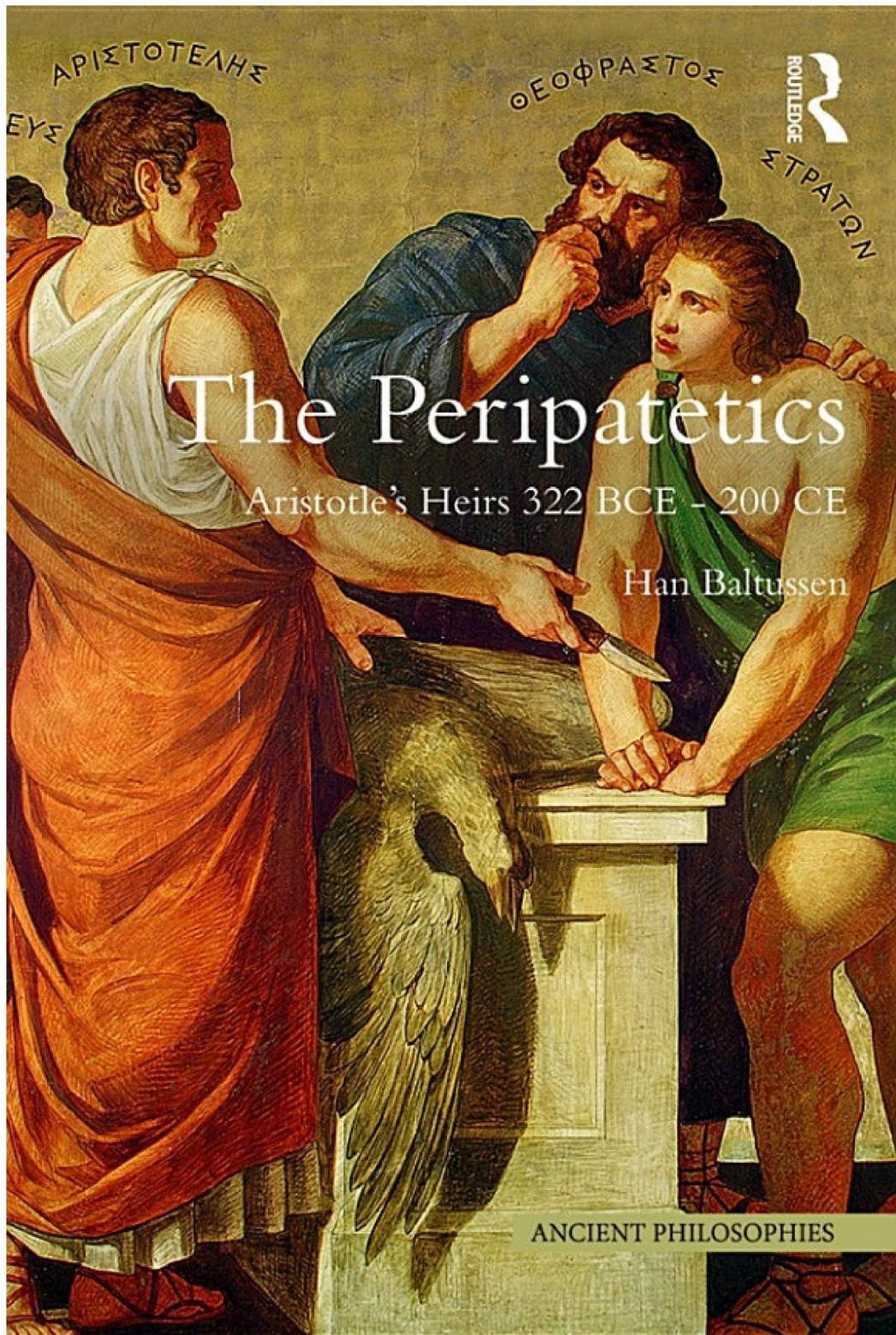




The Peripatetics

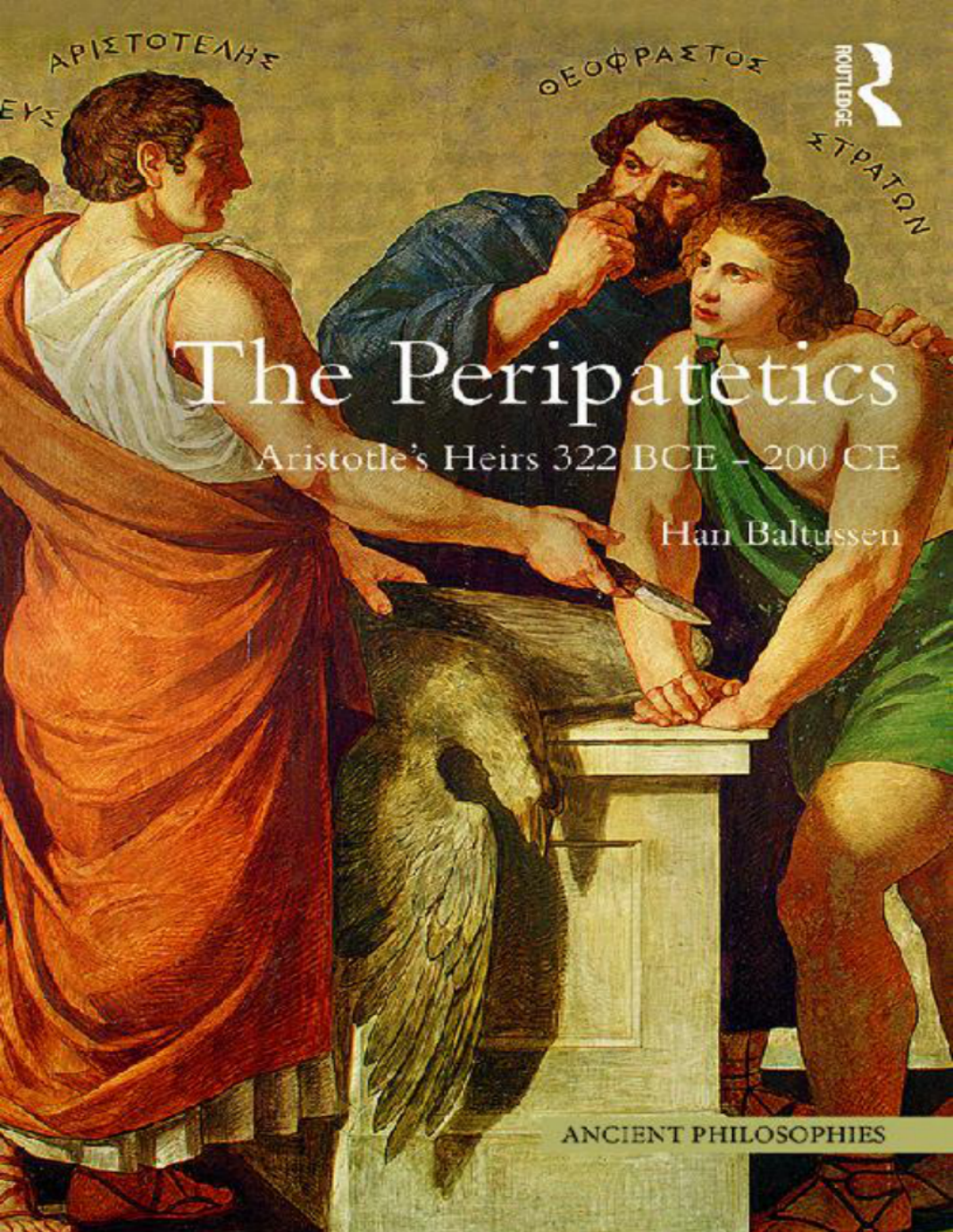
Aristotle's Heirs 322 BCE – 200 CE

Han Baltussen

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The Peripatetics

Aristotle's Heirs 322 BCE – 200 CE

Han Baltussen

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHIES

The Peripatetics

Aristotle's Heirs, 322 BCE–200 CE

This is an accessible and reliable introduction to a little-known but historically pivotal tradition within ancient thought: the followers of Aristotle from his immediate successors to the great commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias. Baltussen is particularly interesting on the question of authority. He shows that allegiance to Aristotle was compatible with originality, and charts disagreements between the Peripatetics as well as their attempts to defend the Aristotelian position against rival schools. Ultimately Aristotle would become “the” philosopher, and study of his works would become synonymous with philosophy itself; Baltussen explains the pre-history of that development.

Professor Peter Adamson, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany

The Peripatetics explores the development of Peripatetic thought from Theophrastus and Strato to the work of the commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias. The book examines whether the internal dynamics of this philosophical school allowed for a unity of Peripatetic thought, or a fundamental tension between philosophical creativity and the notions of core teachings and canonisation. The book discusses the major philosophical preoccupations of the Peripatetics, interactions with Hellenistic schools of thought, and the shift in focus among Greek philosophers in a changing political landscape. It is the first book of its kind to provide a survey of this important philosophical tradition.

Han Baltussen is Hughes Professor of Classics at the University of Adelaide, Australia. After completing his PhD at Utrecht (Netherlands), he held postdoctoral positions in Utrecht, Washington, and London. His research interests include intellectual history and the history of ideas, as well as ancient philosophy.

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The Peripatetics

Aristotle's Heirs, 322 BCE–200 CE

Han Baltussen

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**Dedicated to the memory of R.W. Sharples (1949–2010) in
gratitude for his exemplary scholarship and generous support.**

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- 3 Things and words: language, logic, and reasoning
- 4 Ethics and politics: on morality and citizenship
- 5 Continuity and criticism in the Peripatos
- 6 Intellectual context: rivals and devotees
- 7 Epilogue: from Theophrastus to Alexander of Aphrodisias

Appendix A: Known Peripatetics 322 BCE–250 CE

Appendix B: Modern editions and commentaries on the Peripatetics

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Sources and abbreviations

Anonymous

In Tht. = *in Theaetetus* (Commentary on Plato's Theaetetus)

Athenaeus

Deipnosophistai (*Sophists at Dinner*), D. Olson (Loeb Classical Library)

Aristotle

De an. = *De Anima* (*On the Soul*)

Sens. = *De Sensu* (*On Sense Perception*)

EE = *Eudemian Ethics*

EN = *Nicomachean Ethics*

Metaph. = *Metaphysics*

Phys. = *Physics*

Pol. = *Politics*

Rh. = *Rhetoric*

CAG

Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, (ed.) H. Diels, Berlin 1882–1909 (23 vols).

Cicero

Ac. = *Academica* = *Academics*

Att. = *Ad Atticum* = *Letters to Atticus*

De or. = *De oratore* = *On the orator*

Div. = *De divinatione* = *On divination*

De fin. = *De finibus* = *On the limits of good and evil*

Leg. = *De legibus* = *On laws*

ND = *De nature deorum* = *On the nature of the gods*

Off. = *De officiis* = *On Duties*

Rep. = *De Republica* = *On the Republic*

Top. = *Topica* (i.e., *Dialectic*)

Tusc. = *Disputationes Tusculanae* (Discussions held at Tusculum)

CMG = *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* (editions of Greek physicians, published by the Berlin Academy)

DL = *Diogenes Laertius*

Lives = R. D. Hicks, 1980, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (trans. Loeb,) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press/London: W. Heinemann).

New text: T. Dorandi 2013, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

p.ix

E–K = *Edelstein–Kidd*

L. Edelstein and I. G. Kidd (eds). *Posidonius of Apamea*. Vol. 1: ‘The Fragments’ (1971; second ed. 1989); vol. 2 ‘The Commentary’ (2 vols., 1988); vol. 3 ‘Translation of the Fragments’ (1999). (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

F and S = *Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf* = *RUSCH* vol. IX

Fortenbaugh, W. W. and E. Schütrumpf (eds). 1999. *Demetrius of Phalerum* (Text, Translation and Discussion) (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers).

FHSG = Fortenbaugh, W. W., P. Huby, R. W. Sharples and D. Gutas (eds). *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought and Influence*. 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill).

- H and M = Hellmann and Mirhady = RUSCH
vol. XIX
O. Hellmann and D. Mirhady (eds). 2015. *Phaenias of Eresus* (Text, Translation and Discussion) (New Brunswick and London).
- LS = Long and Sedley
A. A. Long and D. Sedley (eds). 1987. *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (vol. 1: translations of the principal sources; vol. 2: Greek and Latin texts with notes and bibliography) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- MM and M = Martano, Matelli and Mirhady =
RUSCH vol. XVIII
A. Martano, E. Martelli and D. Mirhady (eds). 2012, *Praxiphanes of Mytilene and Chamaeleon of Heraclea*, (NJ: Transaction Publishers).
- Phainias
Fragmenta in Wehrli 1969 (= W.) vol. IX, B. (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co.).
- RUSCH
Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities series of editions, translations and essays on the Theophrastus and other Peripatetics (Listed in Appendix B).
- Seneca
De benef. = *De beneficiis* (*On Acts of Beneficence*)
- SOD = P. Stork, J. Opsomer, T. Dorandi =
RUSCH vol. IX
Stork, P., W. W. Fortenbaugh, J. Opsomer, T. Dorandi, edition of the fragments of Demetrius in Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf (eds) *Demetrius of Phalerum* (Text, Translation and Discussion).
- Sext. Emp. = Sextus Empiricus, sceptic and physician
of the second century CE
M = *Against the Mathematicians*
PH = *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (*Phyrroneiai Hypotyposes*)
- Stork = P. Stork = RUSCH XII
in W. W. Fortenbaugh and S. White (eds). *Lyco of Troas and Hieronymus of Rhodes* (Texts, Translations and Discussion).

SVF

Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, H. v. Arnim (ed.). 1903–1905 (Leipzig/
Berlin: B. G. Teubner).

Suda

Byzantine encyclopedic lexicon (tenth century) of ancient world (ca.
30,000 entries).

Theophrastus

CP = *De causis plantarum* = *Explanations for plant*

DS = *De sens.* = *On sense perception*

HP = *Historia plantarum* = *Investigations into plants*

Ign. = *De igne* = *On fire*

Lap. = *De lapidibus* = *On stones*

Metaph. = *Metaphysics*

Vent. = *De ventis* = *On winds*

SHARPLES =

Sharples 2010

R. W. Sharples 2010. *Peripatetic Philosophy, 200 BC to AD 200. An
Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation* (London: Routledge).

Straton

Fragments (ed.). Sharples, R. W., ‘Strato of Lampsacus: The Sources,
Texts and Translations’, in: M.-L. Desclos, & W. W. Fortenbaugh (eds)
Strato of Lampsacus (Text, Translations and Discussion) (New Brunswick
and London: Transaction Publishers).

White =

Stephen White = RUSCH XIII

S. White (ed.). ‘The fragments of Hieronymus of Rhodes’, in W. W.
Fortenbaugh and S. White (eds) *Lyco of Troas and Hieronymus of Rhodes*
(Texts, Translations and Discussion) (New Brunswick and London:
Transaction Publishers).

Preface

This book is about the Peripatetic school after Aristotle (d. 322 BCE) down to Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 200 CE). Since a recent and accessible account of the Peripatetics in English is still not available (Lynch 1972 is still useful, but now out of date; Grayeff 1974, ch. 2–4 is in some respects flawed), this book fills an existing gap in the scholarly literature by synthesising the new scholarship of the past four decades. The account offered here is not intended to be comprehensive (an impossible task), but may serve as a good starting point for those who are interested in Hellenistic philosophy, while it suggests further readings for anyone wanting to pursue detailed analysis on specific topics or individuals. A useful companion volume is R. Sharples' sourcebook (Routledge, 2010), which covers roughly the same period (200 BCE–200 CE), but has a greater range of materials with some commentary.

Overall I have pursued three aims which engage with traditional and less traditional questions. As a brief history the book aims, firstly, to offer a basic guide for the Peripatos from Theophrastus to Alexander of Aphrodisias, that is, from the establishment of the Lyceum to the great age of commentary on Aristotle's works. Secondly, those who are new to the school will hopefully get an impression of the fragmentary materials that survive, and how scholars have shown great skill and creativity to extract the philosophical ideas from often meagre evidence. Thirdly, I highlight an aspect which to my mind has not yet been sufficiently brought out in existing accounts: the question of the school's internal coherence. Recent research makes us more aware of a paradox lurking at the heart of the school's history: the successors of Aristotle regularly criticised, and took their distance from, a number of Aristotelian doctrines. One might therefore legitimately ask whether they could still be considered faithful in their philosophical conviction and worthy of the label 'Peripatetic'. The answer to this question requires us to operate with a generous notion of a 'school' and the notion of allegiance to one particular set of beliefs (doctrine). Two chapters take a fresh look at these questions and hopefully provide further insight into the lively interactions inside and outside the school.

For assistance in understanding the Peripatetic tradition better, I am grateful to the directors of the Project Theophrastus, Bill Fortenbaugh, Bob Sharples (†), Pamela Huby, and Dimitri Gutas, and some of their close collaborators such as Michael Sollenberger and David Mirhady; to Jaap Mansfeld and David Runia for their pioneering work on the doxographical tradition (*Aëtiana* 1997–); to Richard Sorabji for his immense learning and encouragement; and to all the editors of, and contributors to, the RUSCH volumes of the past three decades. I owe a major debt to the works of Paul Moraux and Hans B. Gottschalk (who was in the process of writing a history of the school at the time of his death), and Peter Steinmetz, whose study of Theophrastus' physics (1964) still is an extremely valuable work.

I should also like to thank the editors involved in the book, initially Steven Gerrard (Acumen) and Elizabeth Thomasson (Routledge) for their guidance and patience. Although it took much longer to prepare this book for the press than we intended, I hope that the final product will serve its purpose as a guide to one of the most influential philosophical schools of thought during its most poorly documented time in history.

I am especially grateful to Peter Adamson, Alex Antoniou, Dirk Baltzly, Sylvia Berryman, George Couvalis, Mark Lim, Aisha Mahmood, and Stefan Schorn, who all offered useful feedback on penultimate drafts of individual chapters, thus improving the style and content of my writing, and rescuing me from a number of errors, inconsistencies, and omissions. Yasmin Kroon assisted in checking reference lists of chapters. Gertjan Verhasselt graciously allowed me a preview of his paper on Peripatetic *bioi* (*Philologus* 2016). Lastly, I should mention my considerable debt to the late Bob Sharples, whose work has been a major guide and inspiration, while his helpful feedback on preparatory studies, always given with incredible speed and generosity, improved my work in many ways. I therefore dedicate the book to his memory. For any remaining flaws I am of course entirely responsible.

Han Baltussen

April 30, 2016

The University of Adelaide

1 Aristotle's Heirs¹

Those associated with the Peripatetic school do not seem to have enjoyed the same appeal as their 'founder'. Despite a lengthy existence, the school faded from the historical record for considerable periods of time, and while it experienced a brief revival during the late Roman republic and early empire, as an active school it vanished soon after 200 CE, ousted by Platonism (and Christianity). Committed followers and occasional devotees of Aristotle can be described, respectively, as those who either were a member of the core group from which a leader was picked, or those who took a serious interest in his works. The distinction is a useful one, since the two groups display various degrees of faithfulness to the Aristotelian doctrines. It should be pointed out, however, that both groups also express disagreement with the great founder and his successors: apparently neither membership nor enthusiasm precluded anyone from expressing dissent. How this affected the school's nature will become clear in the course of the chapters that follow.

While Aristotle's imposing oeuvre stood the test of time, the works of his followers survive mostly in fragments only—apart from a few works by Theophrastus ('scholarch' or head of the school, 322–278 BCE) and the two commentators Aspasius (ca. 150 CE) and Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 200 CE). Evidence for Aristotelian writings in learned circles (where their complete books were read) is found among the Platonists of late antiquity, but Christian authors often had merely indirect access to their works.²

This book tries to present a new synthesis of our current knowledge about the Peripatos, as the school became known, from the death of Aristotle (322 BCE) up to Alexander (ca. 200 CE), his most famous exegete. The key challenge is to reconstruct some of the ideas of individuals who studied and responded to the founder's philosophy, yet are now little more than names in a list or shadowy figures. Their ideas have become selectively quoted, rephrased, and summarised, and are therefore no longer fully retrievable. Earlier attempts to recover the school's development (Zeller in the 1880s, Wehrli in the 1950s and 60s, Moraux 1973, Lynch 1983, and Sharples 2010³) have contributed to the background knowledge, but new details and additional materials are also

available thanks to the efforts of the international working group ‘Project Theophrastus’. This collaborative team has led the way to consolidating the findings of the past decades in the Rutgers series (RUSCH, see Appendix B), led by W.W. Fortenbaugh, R.W. Sharples, P. Huby, and D. Gutas. The first publication, a new collection of the fragments of Theophrastus (FHSG 1992, 2 vols.), inaugurated an ongoing effort to collect, translate, and comment on all Peripatetics down to 100 BCE. A recent contribution to filling the gaps of our knowledge between 200 BCE and 200 CE is Robert Sharples’ sourcebook (SHARPLES).

p.2

One further significant advance that allows for a new account of the school is that the important philosophical commentaries of the late Platonists (300–700 CE) have been translated and studied more intensely in the past three decades. This trend has contributed to our knowledge of the school, because a better understanding of these commentaries, which preserve important Peripatetic fragments, allows us to contextualise the fragments better and glean ancient insights into the texts for our own benefit. Thus both the materials and their sources have come into sharper focus.

Those associating themselves with Aristotle and his work were referred to as the men ‘from the Lykeion’,⁴ those ‘from the *peripatos*’,⁵ or just simply ‘Peripatetics’ (*Peripatêtikoi*). The derivations of the name labels are not as certain as one might expect: they could be the men from the ‘shaded walkway’ (*peripatos* in Greek); or the origin of the name could be the verb *peripateo* (‘to walk around’), originally describing how Plato and Aristotle were in the habit of walking while teaching. Typically, Greek philosophical schools received their names either from the school leader (*scholarchos*) or the location of their activity. Early on the phrase ‘those from the *peripatos*’ was also used to refer to Plato’s students (e.g. to describe Xenocrates and Aristotle, see Philodemus, *History of the Academy* (*Acad. Ind.*) = PHerc 1021; Ammonius, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Categories* 3.8), but it is likely that, once Aristotle left Plato to start his own teaching activity (*scholê*), Platonists became more closely associated with the *Akadêmeion*, a park where a statue of the hero Akadêmos was found (hence ‘academics’). The second derivation for Aristotle and his students is thus not that far removed from the first; still, both remain somewhat uncertain. The habit of ‘walking and talking’ may also have given rise to the name *Peripatêtikoi*—although strikingly the term *peripatêtikos* is only found in sources of later centuries (Strabo 13. 608; Plutarch *Sulla* 26. 2. 2; Diogenes Laertius [= DL] 1. 17).⁶ Once they established a domicile at the *Lykeion*, a park dedicated to the Apollo Lykeios (the Wolfgod), this gave rise to the name ‘the men from the Lykeion’ (Lyceum). The *Lykeion* was located outside the city walls, because as a *metic* (non-Athenian, ‘immigrant’), Aristotle was not allowed to own property

in the city of Athens.⁷

The vagaries of the term ‘Peripatetics’ illustrate well how the nomenclature of philosophical groups was not particularly transparent. And neither was the concept of a ‘school’. In fifth and fourth century Athens, a philosophical ‘school’ often consisted of a group of men congregating around an original and pioneering thinker, who led discussion into questions of life, nature, and morality. ‘School’ therefore does not necessarily mean a building, but a gathering of people, although, as Karamanolis reminds us, Theophrastus did buy the land to provide the school with a location.⁸ This fact justifies the paradoxical conclusion that Aristotle himself was strictly speaking not a Peripatetic because the school was given its official status only after his death. The naming of a school could then happen by its habitual association with a particular place. What’s more, the men from the *Lykeion* can also be described as those associating with a non-citizen (Theophrastus) outside the city walls.⁹ Lastly, that Aristotle set up his own ‘school’ is another marker for the way in which these groups arose: apparently fundamental disagreement over method or doctrine could lead to a change of teacher or to the decision to become independent.

p.3

Aristotle and his successors

The importance of Aristotle in the history of philosophy is undisputed. His name is still uttered with respect and his works are discussed in- and outside modern universities. His vast learning and deep thought influenced Hellenistic thinkers, medieval philosophy in the Western and Arabic traditions. He has been labelled the ‘first scientist’ and the ‘greatest philosopher’. What is not always given due consideration is that Aristotle’s range of intellectual pursuits came to overshadow the successors of his own school. Often their efforts to preserve and continue his work became conflated in the later tradition, and the mechanisms of historical record-keeping also interfered with the ways in which their works were treated.¹⁰ But his influence was not always present in all historical periods and in recent decades the transmission of Aristotelian ideas outside of Aristotle’s works has become an important element in the study of his lasting legacy.

This book wants to approach the school afresh by giving the successors the attention they deserve and by foregrounding two broader themes usually not given a prominent place: doctrinal continuity and interactions with contemporary philosophers. An important part of the narrative will focus on the reception of Aristotle’s ideas among his early successors and on how

historical circumstances and intellectual interactions contributed to the philosophical continuity of Aristotelian thought. But it will also be necessary to look beyond the first few generations after Aristotle's death in order to understand how the loss of direct contact with the founder would change the transmission and reinterpretation of his ideas. In all chapters a brief précis of Aristotle's main views will introduce specific areas in which his successors made contributions.

The 'school' of Aristotle is a convenient term for a tradition of philosophical thought which is rather more diverse than is sometimes acknowledged in standard accounts of the school. The picture that has been emerging in recent decades shows that the label 'Peripatetic' can refer to different styles of engagement with his ideas and works: committed followers, sympathetic readers, admirers, and critics all have chosen the name themselves or have been given the label by others. The story of the Peripatos and its supposed demise has for a long time been dominated by Cicero's account and reinforced by nineteenth-century scholarship of a particular kind. A narrative of a rise and fall was famously popularised by Gibbon's *A History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788). As a model it became convenient to characterise the fate of a philosophical school, a culture, or a whole civilisation. That there should be a natural waxing and waning of cultures or intellectual movements is of course a widely accepted idea, but the stronger version of such a pessimistic perspective was perhaps reinforced by post-WWI books such as Oswald Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918). In addition, classical scholarship followed historical trends by adding to the distortion of ancient philosophy by emphasising the 'great men', the trailblazers and school founders, implying that whoever came after Plato and Aristotle was not worth looking at. This classicising trend persisted until the 1970s and 1980s, when scholars began to publish new and pioneering work on the Hellenistic period, highlighting the importance of philosophers who came after Aristotle.

p.4

If this book attempts to give a more sympathetic account of the Peripatetics, it owes much to the more recent characterisation of those associated with Aristotle's thought, both the official successors as well as admirers of his work. Such an approach requires us to get away from the position that Aristotle did it all and that his followers merely followed his doctrines. Aristotle's importance and influence in the Western canon is undoubtedly justified, primarily because of his pioneering and original work, but the disparaging attitude towards his successors in nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship is simply unjustified: firstly, comparing successors in the field with such pioneers as Aristotle—much like Newton or Einstein were in modern physics—is invidious and misplaced. Secondly, where evidence for the work of his

successors is incomplete or lost (and it often is), there is a considerable risk of misjudging their importance. The least we can do is try to find a better balance one way or the other in order to avoid unwarranted conclusions on the basis of very limited evidence.

The Peripatetics were a part of a wider philosophical landscape, and their struggle to remain relevant to their contemporaries is reflected in interactions with these other schools. By highlighting the role Aristotle's ideas had among his followers and the responses they elicited outside the school, as presented in [Chapter 6](#), we should get a better view of the debates and the ideas they considered important, but it will also place the Peripatetic way of thinking in a wider context. For some time Aristotle's ideas became studied, expanded, and adapted by his followers, but the increased competition among philosophical schools seems to have caused the school to disappear from the historical spotlight. Especially between ca. 225–155 BCE our evidence is almost absent on any activity by Peripatetics, and the records for school heads are incomplete and partly in conflict (see p. 6, n. 15).

From the death of Aristotle (322 BCE) until the inauguration of a chair in Aristotelian philosophy by emperor Marcus Aurelius in Athens (160s CE), 'Peripatetic thought' was characterised by a significant set of core ideas that made the school distinctive and (initially) competitive in the rapidly changing world of the Hellenistic era. The immediate successors of Aristotle were left with the task of keeping a school going, which needed to cover an unprecedented range of research activities and build on a wide body of knowledge. It was not until much later that 'Aristotelianism' could be identified as an orthodoxy. Scholars now believe this cohesion began to emerge in the first century BCE.

p.5

We can identify a few stages in the history of the Peripatos that will make our narrative easier to follow. These stages are closely linked to the (availability of the) corpus itself. Early Peripatetic thought covers the period from the late third century BCE (Theophrastus, head from 322–278 BCE) down to the late second century. During this first stage much of the school activity was marked by the continuing effort to build on the foundations of the system Aristotle had so boldly laid out. A second period is sometimes referred to as the 'revival of Aristotle' in the first century BCE, after the 'edition' of his works by Andronicus (ca. 50 BCE). During this stage we see the consolidation of a text (corpus) and the beginnings of exegetical activities (stage 3); it is usually said to run up to around 200 CE when Alexander of Aphrodisias was writing his elaborate commentaries on Aristotle's physical, logical, and metaphysical works.

Early heads of the Peripatos (called ‘scholarchs’) as a rule took Aristotle’s ideas as their starting point, but criticism and disagreement were certainly possible and in a way unavoidable, because Aristotle was a typical pioneer who often did not fully develop every area he ventured into: while Plato has been called ‘the most unsystematic of creators’, Aristotle can be described as ‘the most inconclusive of systematisers’.¹¹ Surprising as it may sound, Aristotle’s prolific output over so many areas of study did not cover them comprehensively or even cover all possible fields of inquiry (his *ambition* to cover all of nature is recognized by Cicero, *De fin.* 5. 9 = 14I SHARPLES). His followers and students treated Aristotle’s philosophy as a modifiable set of proposals and hypotheses to understand and explain the world. Karamanolis has argued that the same holds for the Platonists, who ‘were not expected to hold the same views as Plato’, including Aristotle while he was a follower of Plato.¹² In other words, students and followers did not shy away from disagreeing, adding to, adjusting, and refining what the master had written.

The scholarchs were known for many personal quirks and at least one professional specialisation. Theophrastus is especially famous for his plant studies (his impressive taxonomy influenced Linnaeus in the eighteenth century) and his *Characters*, even if he covered much more. Further individuals associated with Theophrastus are Chamaeleon, who wrote on a variety of topics (pleasure, drunkenness, the gods, poets), and Praxiphanes, who worked on biography and grammar. Strato of Lampsacus (d. ca. 269) clearly focused on topics in physics (hence his nickname *ho physikos*, ‘the physicist’, DL 5. 58). His successor in turn, Lyco of Troas, is known for his interest in education (fr. 2–3 and 16 SFOD) and ethics, but also for a liking of luxurious dinners (also said of Demetrius fr. 43A SOD) and dress style (also said of Aristotle, DL 5. 1, and Theophrastus, Athenaeus 1.21a = fr. 12 FHSG). After Lyco the succession lists are incomplete and not in agreement.¹³ We may, however, accept Demetrius as the next in line, who ruled Athens from 317–307 BCE.

p.6

The next time we hear of a Peripatetic philosopher of note is in 156/55 BCE. The head of the Peripatos, Critolaus was part of a delegation of philosophers visiting Rome to plead on behalf of Athens for an exemption from a penalty for attacking their neighbouring town Oropus (Plutarch, *Cato the Elder* 22; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1. 5. 14; Cicero, *On the orator* 2. 37, 38). Since each of the most important schools was represented in this delegation, this story gives a good indication that the Peripatetics were still considered among the major philosophical schools. The embassy included Critolaus because of his good standing as an orator and philosopher. It was not unusual in Hellenistic times for philosophers to act as negotiators or advisors, since they were skilled orators and hence good negotiators who could also represent

different interest groups of a city in a neutral way.¹⁴

The various Peripatetics we hear of in the first century BCE left little trace except for the fragmentary scraps reported in much later sources. Andronicus of Rhodes (in some late sources referred to as the eleventh scholarch¹⁵), Boethus of Sidon, and Xenarchus of Seleucia are all associated with the revival in this period but details are hazy. Andronicus was involved in imposing some kind of organisation on the collection of ‘essays’ (Porphry declared that he was doing this for Plotinus’ works ‘in the same way as Andronicus the Peripatetic’, *Life of Plotinus* 24 = 2F SHARPLES). The late Platonists Simplicius (ca. 480–540 CE) and his contemporary Philoponus report on their engagement with Aristotle’s works, their own writings treating the *Categories* as a fundamental work. In subsequent chapters some of the details will be reported to show how we now know that the history of the Peripatos is perhaps richer than previously thought.¹⁶

The early scholarchs deserve our special attention, since we have more evidence for their writings and the judgement by later thinkers is often quite positive. Although it is probably true that after Aristotle the full scope of his studies was never again completely covered by one individual successor, we should not ignore the fact that Theophrastus’ achievement came very close, as the list of his works indicates (DL 5. 42–50). His ancient reputation as ‘the most distinguished’ among Aristotle’s many pupils and as having ‘remarkable intelligence and industry’ would confirm this (at DL 5. 35–6 Aristotle himself is even said to agree). Theophrastus is known for his probing investigations and carefully worded disagreements (see e.g. his *Metaphysics* and fr. 694 FHSG—and below [Chapters 2](#) and [5](#)). And it should not be overlooked that DL presents almost matching praise for Demetrius (ibid. 5. 80): ‘In number of works and their total length he has surpassed almost all contemporary Peripatetics. In learning and versatility he has no equal.’ Such testimonia support the view that the idea of the school’s decline is in need of some qualification.

We are fortunate to have some information about the organisation of the teaching activities in the school. Lectures for the advanced students took place during mornings and ‘public talks’ in the afternoon (DL 5. 1). The two types of writings we know about roughly correspond to these activities: those that were more specialised for a small circle (sometimes called *esoteric*, a term which should not be taken to have a sinister meaning but simply signifies their advanced level) and those for a general public (more polished works, called *exoteric*).¹⁷ Most of Aristotle’s extant works fall into the first category. In addition, because only Athenians could own a piece of land legally, many philosophers were not entitled to private property, since many were considered ‘immigrants’ (*metics*, a term discussed in detail by Plutarch, *On Exile* 14). Many Greek writers and philosophers came from outside Athens, and were forced to

set up their teaching activity outside the city walls.¹⁸ Aristotle, Strato, and Eudemus were all *metics* (non-citizens, *metoikoi*), but Demetrius was an Athenian and a successful political leader (DL 5. 75 = fr. 1 SOD), who helped Theophrastus to secure the right to buy land for the school (DL 5. 39).

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The idea that Aristotle had encouraged his students to take up the study of one particular area was advocated by the German scholar Werner Jaeger in his important study *Aristoteles* (1923; Engl. transl. 1948). On this view the division of labour in the school looked rather suspiciously like that of a nineteenth-century academic research team under the guidance of a professor. This picture is now considered quite anachronistic. It is, however, natural to assume that some form of ‘specialisation’ occurred in line with opportunity and people’s personal interests, and to pursue research in areas not covered by Aristotle (e.g. Theophrastus on elaborate studies on plants; Aristotle perhaps wrote one short work). The book-lists of the first five scholarchs in Diogenes Laertius, though incomplete, also suggest this. All school members were quite versatile and worked in a range of areas; yet to ‘specialise’ would have been regarded as unusual and with the changing times came changing concerns and interests. It is fair to say that ethics, the study of human behaviour (*êthos*), and appropriate rules to regulate them (laws and political structure) became the central concern of lecturing and writing activities from the early third century. In general, Hellenistic philosophers focused on ethics and epistemology.

Further information on members of the school is found in a variety of sources, in particular during the late Republic and the early Roman empire when a revival of scholarship and an interest in classical Athens (the so-called ‘Second Sophistic’) led to a keen study of the literature and philosophy of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. Authors like Cicero (first century BCE), Plutarch and Athenaeus (second century CE), and Diogenes Laertius (third century) had access to sources we no longer have. Later philosophical commentators up to the sixth century also provide a lot of useful information (see final section to this chapter, Sources). Our most important source for the lives of the early Peripatetics is clearly Diogenes Laertius *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (early third century CE): his fifth book deals with the Peripatetics from Aristotle (389–322 BCE) to Heraclides (ca. 388–312), which clearly shows he does not cover the whole succession down to Alexander of Aphrodisias.

What exactly it meant to be a ‘member’ of a philosophical ‘school’ in the fourth century has been a point of discussion among modern scholars. It is not always easy to make out what the label ‘Peripatetic’ entails. ‘School’ may also suggest a more formal set-up than was actually the case (it can mean

‘institution’ or ‘tradition’), and even teaching was not a very formal process. When we noted that their locations were associated with local gods in a particular place—the site of Plato’s school (*Akadêmia*) was in a grove dedicated to Athena with a statue for Akademos; the Lyceum (Greek *Lykeion*) a gymnasium close to a grove dedicated to Apollo Lykeios—we pointed to a religious aspect which gave such groups coherence.¹⁹ But in general the origin of such ‘debating clubs’ was that like-minded men gathered around an inspirational and knowledgeable figure whom they regarded as their teacher and mentor.

p.8

Main figures of the Peripatic tradition

We should here have a brief look at the most significant members of the early Peripatos. Some were school leaders, others were considered Peripatetics with a high public profile. The list is based on materials from DL and some additions from other sources. (A much fuller list is given in Appendix A).

Theophrastus of Eresus (*school head 322–ca. 289 BCE*) **[DL 5. 36–57]**

Theophrastus had been a close collaborator before he became the successor to Aristotle and second head of the Peripatos. Born on the island of Eresos near the Turkish coast under the name Tyrtamus, he came to Athens in the 350s for an education, and after a stint with Plato (DL 3. 46) he joined Aristotle in the Peripatos. After forty years of collaboration he succeeded Aristotle as the head of the school. His name ‘Theophrastos’ actually means ‘divine speaker’ in Greek, a nickname which Aristotle apparently gave him (DL 5. 38). His literary production was considerable and compatible with his reputation as an intelligent and hard-working scholar.²⁰ Further, in his scientific researches he preferred to explain things by multiple explanations of certain phenomena, perhaps a sign he did no longer believe in the possibility of a definitive assessment of things by singular causes.²¹ This is suggested in part by his greater emphasis on the *limits* of physical enquiry.²² In ethics and logic there is a similar trend to systematisation, but also expansion of particular positions.²³ The extant writings comprise a set of short works on natural philosophy, hundreds of fragments, and a short tract called *Characters* (vignettes of character types described in lively language reminiscent of comedy—see [Chapter 4](#)). In his will we can see his considerable wealth and the extensive buildings the school owned.²⁴

Closely associated with Theophrastus were Phaenias, Chamaeleon, and Praxiphanes. A few details about their works and ideas are known in a small number of fragments and comments found in later authors. For Chamaeleon we have some 70 odd fragments (ed. by Martano, Matelli, and Mirhady 2012 = RUSCH vol. 18, See Appendix B). The texts talk about his activities in different areas, in particular philosophy and literature. The titles of his work show a great interest in topics which Theophrastus also covered (e.g. pleasure and drunkenness), but he also studied and wrote about the poets such as Aeschylus (fr. 43A), Anacreon (fr. 39), Hesiod (fr. 16), and Homer (fr. 17 and 20). Unfortunately most passages are very short, and several are rather incomplete. We may sometimes consider information more secure when multiple sources agree (about a detail, or titles), for instance, when we find two sources mention a work *On the Gods*, which in this context attribute to Chamaeleon the claim that the expression ‘know thyself’ was Thales’ (fr. 3B = Clement of Alexandria, *Patchwork* 1.14, and 3C = *Rhetorical Sayings*). But such a method only makes the information slightly more plausible, since the title for his work *On Pleasure* only occurs in one source (Athenaeus). Overall the work seems best placed in a sympotic context.

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For Phaenias (fl. 336–332²⁵) we have in all some 58 fragments (Hellmann and Mirhady 2015), showing his interest in topics such as logic (*Categories*), history, and polemic (*Against the Sophists*, fr. 15A–B H and M), biography—he wrote about the tyrants of Sicily (fr. 17–25 H and M), Socratics (fr. 36–37 H and M), and poets (fr. 38–40 H and M)—and perhaps botany (fr. 41A–55 H and M).

Praxiphanes of Mytiline is a nebulous figure and our knowledge of him is based on just 20 fragments, among which are several papyri (which indicates that he played no major role in the literary tradition). He had a reputation for work in grammar and literary studies. He was considered the first grammarian by Clement (*Strom.* 1.16.79, 3 = fr. 9A MM and M) and wrote on poets, and a work in which Plato and Isocrates converse about poets (DL 3. 8 = fr. 22; 10. 13). Callimachus wrote a work entitled *Reply to Praxiphanes* (= fr. 11). Among his writings we find works on history, poetry, friendship, and rhetoric, and comments on Hesiod, Homer, Sophocles, and Plato’s *Timaeus*.

Strato of Lampsacus (335–269 BCE; scholarch 289–269 BCE) [DL 5. 58–64]

The third head of the Peripatos was Strato, from the city of Lampsacus on the eastern side of the Hellespont (Troad). He was a student of Theophrastus and

successor to the latter at his death in 289 BCE. His nickname, ‘the natural philosopher’ (*ho physikos*), encapsulates his primary interests in physics, which he gave a new foundation. His views deviate considerably from Aristotle (see [Chapters 2 and 6](#)). His position as scholarch is confirmed in DL 5. 58 and Cicero’s *Nature of the Gods* 1.35 (fr. 19A).

Some 100 fragments are all we have left of his work (fr. 1–87 SHARPLES, but with A, B, C subdivisions in a number of them) so they amount to a very small total indeed. He wrote considerably less than Theophrastus and focused on topics in physics (fr. 15–74 SHARPLES), logic (13–16), ethics and politics (82–86), psychology and zoology (55–81), and perhaps medicine (87); cf. DL 5. 59–60). Typically sources mention Strato in a list of names, which means such passages occur in other collections of the Peripatetics (see e.g. fr. 20). Compare this to the list of works (13 titles) and one can see how it is that the thought of Strato has not survived in abundance nor in a convenient form. The puzzle scholars need to resolve is how to extract a cohesive picture from these fragmentary thoughts, which is a considerable challenge.

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Eudemus of Rhodes (*ca.* 280–*ca.* 300 BCE) [not in DL]

Eudemus was a fellow student and contemporary of Theophrastus. He moved away from Athens and returned to his place of birth, the island of Rhodes, after not being selected for the role of scholarch (322 BCE). His works dealt with topics in physics (we know he produced a discussion of Aristotle’s *Physics* in which he skipped book 7), but also with important areas of ancient science (geometry, astronomy). The fragments of his writings were discussed in a volume in 1997 (proceedings from a conference), but a new text edition is in preparation and expected soon, with new evaluative essays (RUSCH series, see Appendix B).

Lyco of Troas (*ca.* 299–*ca.* 225 BCE; school head 269–225) [DL 5. 65–74]

Lyco was one of the longest serving heads (45 years, if we may trust the sources) and known for his interest in the education of young men. He is said to have lived at the court of Pergamum at some point (DL 5. 67), but also assisted the Athenians with advice, although it is not said what kind of advice is meant (ibid. 5. 66). Antigonus of Carystus’ portrayal of Lyco as a lover of lavish parties (fr. 8 SFOD = Athenaeus *Deipn.* 547D–548B) is anecdotal and no doubt exaggerated, possibly because it was taken from a hostile source.

In DL 5. 73 the biographical notes on Lyco mention his will. The passage makes an interesting distinction between books ‘read’, ‘published’ (*anegnōsmena*), and ‘unpublished’ (*anekdota*). Lyco entrusted the second group to one Kallinos to edit carefully (a Kallinos is also mentioned in Theophrastus’ will, DL. 5. 53, but probably not the same man). Lyco also possessed cushions and rugs which he gave as presents, presumably because they were of some value. DL’s final comment on his care for students and good management (DL 5. 74) is compatible with Lyco’s long leadership of 44 years. The fact that two doctors are mentioned in the will suggests he had a drawn-out illness (probably severe gout, DL 5. 68—an affliction often associated with the consumption of red wine and rich food).

Aristo of Ceos (fl. ca. 225 BCE) [not in DL]

We know very little about Aristo. The name was so common that the sources easily confuse him with several namesakes, in particular the Stoic Aristo of Chios. DL 7. 163 lists the latter’s works but adds the comment that Panaetius (a Stoic) and Sosicrates (a historian) attributed all these works to Aristo of Ceos, which is why Wehrli (*SA* vol. VI) also attributed these works to the Peripatetic. There is very little good evidence to check the veracity of this claim, but it is worth noting that Athenaeus in his *Sophists at Dinner* attributes one work, entitled *Conversation on Love*, to Aristo (*Deipnos*. x. 419, xiii. 563, xv. 674). Cicero calls him ‘a man of elegance and taste, but lacking gravity and energy’ (*De fin.* 5. 5). His writings ranged over topics such as Democritus’ doctrine, dialogues, notes on vanity (*kenodoxia*), and polemical works against orators and dialecticians and one aimed at Kleanthes. Plutarch attributes a work to him not listed in DL: *Lyco*, probably a tribute to his teacher. Aristo may have made a collection of the wills of Peripatetics, which, as we already saw, DL quoted in the *Lives*. The comment at DL 5. 61 may imply that Aristo wrote such a work. A striking feature that may support this idea is the fact that most wills are quite uniform (those for Plato and Epicurus are quite different) and that the last will recorded in DL is that of Lyco, his predecessor.²⁶

p.11

Hieronimus of Rhodes (ca. 290–ca. 230 BCE) [not in DL]

We know of a good number of works for Hieronimus, in particular on the history of philosophy, poetry, and on ethics. What stands out are his musings on pleasure and pain—possibly under the influence of his older contemporary Epicurus (more on such interactions in [Chapter 6](#)). Our information on his ideas on the notion of *aponia* (absence of pain) come primarily from Cicero,

who called him ‘learned and elegant’ (fr. 8B White; see further [Chapter 4](#)), but denounced his idea that *aponia* could be the ‘highest good’ (*summum bonum*); according to Cicero such a position made him unworthy of the label ‘Peripatetic’ (the text is quoted below, p. 16). We have 15 titles of his works, among them letters, works on anger, raising children, tragedy, and drunkenness (fr. 8A White).

Demetrius of Phalerum (ca. 350–ca. 285 BCE) [DL 5. 75–85]

Demetrius studied with Theophrastus and became an active politician, orator, and Athenian legislator: ‘he rendered many splendid services to his home city’ (DL 5. 75). His first important political task was as an envoy for Athens to Macedon after the defeat in the Lamian war (322 BCE). Over a decade (317–307 BCE) he dominated Athenian politics under the protection of Cassander of Macedon.²⁷ His role as lawgiver is clear from his title (*nomothetês*). Unfortunately evidence for his legal proposals is meager: we know of one law that restricted extravagance of burial and mourning practices (Cic. *On law* 2. 26. 66). His association with the Macedon court had a negative influence on his reputation. After he was expelled from Athens by Demetrius I Poliorkêtês, he went to Egypt where he stayed at the court of Ptolemy I, but died in mysterious circumstances, perhaps as a result of machinations involving jealousy over court appointments.

Demetrius produced a wide range of works, which DL 5. 80–1 groups as political or historical, poetical or rhetorical. Topics range from law, Homer, and Socrates, to love, fables, the constitution, old age, opportunity, and good fortune. His work on Socrates mentioned in this list is perhaps the same as the *Defense of Socrates* mentioned at DL 9. 15. Prolific and politically active, Demetrius was the first major public figure of the Peripatetic school, when the Macedonian overlords allowed him to be in charge at Athens in the late fourth century BCE.

p.12

Aristoxenus of Tarentum (ca. 375–ca. 335 BCE) [not in DL]

Another early student in the school, Aristoxenus has become known primarily for writing on music and biography. He is probably a pioneer of writing biography (life of an individual from birth to death, as distinct from ways of life, *bioi*). The son of a musician, he is said to have written extensively about

musical theory (found in Suda, a tenth-century lexicon): *Elements of Harmony* (*Stoikheia Harmonika*). His writing on music was ambitious in that he tried to give a comprehensive account of its parts and modes. He also wrote several biographical sketches (on Pythagoras, Archytas, Plato, Socrates).²⁸ His overall oeuvre is supposed to have reached 453 books (Suda), a suspiciously high number, but not inconceivable, since the Stoic Chrysippus is said to have written ‘more than 705’ (DL 7. 180). Then again, (high) numbers in antiquity are notoriously unreliable. Nonetheless, these philosophers were clearly used to writing a lot, and depending on whether we estimate the length of a book (–roll) as full size (up to three meters long) or more like a short ‘brochure’, to produce several hundred is perfectly possible for an average.²⁹

Heraclides of Heraclea (Pontus) [DL 5. 86–94]

Heraclides, born into a well-off family, is a disputed figure in the line-up of Aristotelians. He is part of DL’s listing of successors and students, but recent scholarship has denied him a place in the firmament of the Lyceum. In DL we read that he went to Athens and first joined the Platonist Speusippus and Pythagoreans before becoming a student of Aristotle (DL 5. 86). Gottschalk in his study on Heraclides (1980) has rejected this connection and several scholarly reviews agree with him.³⁰ He prefers to see him as an independent Platonist.³¹ This verdict of Heraclides as Platonist also forces us to ignore DL’s testimony, in particular the comment that he ‘listened to Aristotle’ (5. 86), in which the verb form *êkouse* is typically the technical term for the student–teacher relation, implying that he attended his classes.³² The confusion may have arisen from the fact that he was contemporary to Aristotle at a time that those in the Academy were all figuring out what kind of Platonist they wanted to be.³³ His work covers topics in ethics, rhetoric, politics, physics, and astronomy (DL 5.87–8), specifically topics on law, soul, poetry, solutions, exegeses to Heraclitus and Democritus, rhetoric, historical works on Pythagoras, and discoveries. In a recent reconstruction of Aristotle’s dialogue *Protrepticus* (or *Exhortation to Philosophy*) a likely fragment of Heraclides is believed to feature, another link to Aristotle if correct.³⁴

p.13

Dicaearchus (ca. 350–ca. 285 BCE) [not in DL]

An intelligent and independent thinker, Dicaearchus had a considerable breadth of learning. Surviving titles and descriptions of his works indicate that he was known for treatises on such topics as the soul (see [Chapter 2](#)), geography, and prophecy. His most famous and original contributions are to

what we would call ‘cultural history’. He wrote a ‘biography of Greece’ (fr. 55–56A Mirhady, based on Varro and Porphyry) and an account of early philosophers which in approach resembles neither Aristotle’s nor Theophrastus’. Unfortunately much of his writing has been lost, as the known list of titles indicates (three works in Suda s.v. = fr. 2 Mirhady). Cicero admired him and had access to quite a few of his books (*Att.* 2. 2. 2 = fr. 9 Mirhady). Dicaearchus recently has been described as ‘examining cultural evolution’ in his *Life of Greece*. His study of the history of philosophy allows us to say that—rather than Jaeger’s idea that he was a philosophical reformer—he ‘focused on the philosophical way of life itself’.³⁵ The work representing his efforts to undertake this broad study may have been published in his *On Lives*, as a comment in DL 3. 4 (= fr. 47 Mirhady) testifies, when he describes Plato’s youthful activities as practising ‘painting and writing poetry, first dithyrambs, and then also lyric poems and tragedies’.³⁶ His work went quite far back into early history, and was critical of previous accounts of early Greek accounts of wise men and sages. Part of his critique concerned the fact that in his day clever speech won people the title ‘philosopher’, while in earlier times it was all about performing honourable deeds (fr. 36 Mirhady).³⁷

Clearchus of Soli [*not in DL*]

Clearchus of Soli was a Peripatetic writing in the late fourth century BCE. He is thought to have travelled widely (even as far as Ai-Khanoum, in current day Afghanistan). His writings cover a range of topics such as lives (*bioî*), friendship, flattery, Plato’s *Republic*, commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus*, proverbs and riddles, sleep, animals in water, and anatomy. But as with other Peripatetics, very little has survived. He is also the source of an anecdote in which Aristotle supposedly met with a Jewish philosopher (preserved in Josephus, see p. 166).

Critolaus (ca. 200–ca. 118 BCE) [*not in DL*]

Critolaus was a Peripatetic from Lycia, who joined the school under Aristo of Ceos (fifth head of the school). We know very little about his life, except for his participation in the famous embassy of philosophers to Rome in 155 BCE to request an exemption from a tax imposed on Athens when they had destroyed the city of Oropus. His main interest was rhetoric (Cicero praises his eloquence (*De fin.* 5. 5)) and moral philosophy, adding to Aristotle’s ethics (Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 5. 17). Often Cicero’s judgement that he ‘aimed to emulate the ancients’ (*imitari antiquos voluit*, *De fin.* 5. 5) is interpreted as Critolaus being conformist and orthodox. This is not necessarily the only way to read this comment: *imitari* can indeed mean ‘imitate, act like, copy’, but another viable translation is ‘seek to resemble’. As we will see, Critolaus both followed and deviated from Aristotle, and seems to have been especially keen to differentiate

the Peripatetic views on ethics from the Stoic positions.³⁸ Critolaus was probably dead by 111 BCE, when Licinius Crassus came to Athens to find Diodorus of Tyre as head of the school (Cic. *De or.* 1. 11).

p.14

Diodorus of Tyre (*late second century. BCE*) [not in DL]

Details about Diodorus are sparse. Cicero's comment quoted above gives us a rough chronology of his time as scholarch, making him the successor to Critolaus (late second century BCE; cf. Clement, *Strom.* 1. 2). His position in ethics caused Cicero to declare him un-Peripatetic, because Diodorus apparently declared the greatest good (*summum bonum*) to be virtue with the absence of pain (*De Fin.* 2. 6, 11; 4. 18; 5. 5, 8, 25). A very similar position attributed to Hieronymus (absence of pain the highest good) led to the same denunciation by Cicero (*Tusc. Disp.* 5. 30 presents Hieronymus as one of four basic positions on highest good, 5. 31 mentions Diodorus together with Calliphon; for the rejection of Hieronymus' view as un-Peripatetic, see below, p. 16).

Andronicus of Rhodes (*active ca. 50–ca. 15 BCE*) [not in DL]

Andronicus was the eleventh scholarch according to some sources (see p. 55, n. 50). The lack of information on the school leaders between Diodorus and Andronicus makes a chronology difficult, but Ammonius mentions him as a scholarch (Comm. on *De int.* 5, 29). Strabo confirms his birth place as Rhodes and Plutarch gives him the label *Rhodios*, 'from Rhodes'. His importance for the tradition is clear from many respectful references to his work in later commentators. Andronicus was involved in editing and studying Aristotle's works and this activity is connected to the upsurge of the study of Aristotle in the first century BCE.³⁹

Aspasius (*first century CE*) [not in DL]

Commentator on Aristotle, about whose personal life we know next to nothing. According to Boethius (ca. 476–525/6? CE, translator of and commentator on Aristotle's logic), Aspasius wrote commentaries on most of Aristotle's works—an indication of his role as a teacher, no doubt. We find explicit mention of *De Interpretatione*, the *Physica*, *Metaphysica*, *Categoriae*, and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* only

survives partially for books 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8. His commentary reveals detailed exegesis of the text.⁴⁰

p.15

Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 150–ca. 220 CE) [not in DL]

The last well-known Peripatetic and the much praised exegete of Aristotle's works. Appointed to one of the philosophy chairs (*thronoi*) in Athens, which had been established by emperor Marcus Aurelius in the 160s, he produced important interpretations of many of Aristotle's works, which would become the standard for commentary writing in the following centuries. We still possess his commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, *Physics* (fragments), *On Sense Perception*, *On the Soul*, *Meteorology*, *Coming-to-Be and Perishing*, *Topics*, *Sophistical Refutations*, *Prior Analytics I* as well as his own treatises *On the Soul*, *On Fate*, *On Stoic Physics* (*On Mixture*), *Ethical Problems*, *Quaestiones*; (in Arabic) *Refutation of Galen's Work on the Theory of Motion*, *On Providence*, *On the Principles of the Universe*. Although he is included in this short survey, Alexander's role in this book is mostly as chronological limit to the Aristotelian tradition as defined in this study, the 'bookend' to the narrative of this study; given his extensive writings it will not be possible to treat him in any great detail within the scope of this book. R.W. Sharples' work is fundamental for understanding his activities as commentator, teacher, and philosopher.⁴¹

This brief overview based on DL 5 and a few other sources has attempted to give the bare bones for the biographical information we possess for the Peripatetics down to 200 CE (see also SHARPLES, ch. 1). In some cases the information on their lives will be extended once we move further in time, but our knowledge for the first centuries BCE and CE is really limited. Overall their writings clearly show the broader interest these early Peripatetics had in the history of humankind and its intellectual endeavours.

Doctrinal continuity

Three major questions which are closely interconnected will direct my investigation when reviewing the evidence: first, what the label 'Peripatetic' signifies (total/partial allegiance to Aristotle's doctrines? Interest in Aristotle's ideas?); secondly, whether we can speak of a clear continuity in the Peripatetic doctrine; and thirdly, whether the Aristotelians (a more appropriate label as we progress in time) represented a coherent doctrine and cohesive community. I shall briefly discuss the last point here and will return to the other two later.

The important question of doctrinal continuity emerges in the evaluations of the early Peripatetics: how did Aristotle's works direct the internal dynamics of the school? What if Neleus, who inherited the library, really took it away? Early on his writings seem to have dictated philosophical activities without acquiring canonical status. Asking about continuity immediately also evokes the question of the unity of Peripatetic thought. We shall have to ask what it meant to be a 'Peripatetic' (e.g. would those who studied Aristotle's works find it problematic to consider themselves a Peripatetic while being critical of Aristotle's ideas? The answer turns out to be 'no').

The broader question concerns the notion of unity in a school of thought. Should we ask whether loyalty was a consideration in ancient times? Did school membership entail 'toeing the party line'? Questions like these already arose in antiquity, when it became clear that successive heads of school often diverged from, or disagreed with, the founder. Gotschalk suggested that 'the mark of a true Peripatetic was the freedom with which he handled the ideas he inherited and applied them to whatever problems he had to deal with' in most areas of philosophy.⁴² One example may serve to show how this was already an issue in antiquity. When Cicero evaluated the interpretations of the greatest good (*optimum bonum*), he expressed a view about the Peripatetic Hieronymus of Rhodes. Hieronymus' position did not agree with Cicero's rather principled (and exaggerated) view on the school's unity (*De fin.* 5. 14⁴³):

p.16

Now why I should call him a Peripatetic I do not know, since he identified the greatest good with absence of pain, and whoever disagrees about the greatest good disagrees about the whole philosophical system.

(trans. White)

Like Cicero we are entitled to reflect on the internal unity of the school and to ask whether criticism of the founder's ideas may constitute a threat to it. If we assume that a philosophical school has a certain unity and intellectual coherence, it is natural to wonder what implication this has for the allegiance to, and consistency with, Aristotle's philosophical 'system', which on closer inspection turns out to be quite incomplete and open to criticism. But, as we will see, critical assessment was not unexpected: Aristotle wrote a lot about a lot of things, and brilliantly so most of the time, but without thoroughly working out all of the details, interconnections, and implications. In addition, many of the writings we now have are rather turgid and dense 'lecture notes', not his polished literary output; in other words, they do not always present us with easy access to his thought nor to the presumed coherence one might expect.⁴⁴ We will do well to realise that the generations coming after such an intellectual colossus faced a major challenge in keeping his work going, let

alone matching it. In short, what we are looking at in this tradition is the tension between philosophical creativity and innovation on the one hand, and the notion of core teachings and canonisation on the other. In [Chapter 5](#) I will consider how much debate there was within the school about the core and the periphery of the master's philosophical thought.

A second major issue to keep in mind while reading this book concerns the school's interactions with the philosophical and socio-political environment of the time, its external relations, so to speak. The intellectual environment became more important as other schools of thought (such as Stoicism and Epicureanism) came into play and started to compete with the now established Platonists and Peripatetics. In the case of the Stoics and Epicureans, the followers of the supposed founders definitely considered them as authorities. Peripatetics seem an exception at this stage.

Athens remained a centre of philosophical activity after Aristotle's death, but philosophy was no longer the privilege of aristocratic Greeks: more and more non-Athenians had come to Athens and started to contribute to the intellectual debates and to found their own 'schools'. In addition, under pressure of the new political and economic circumstances (the collapse of Alexander's 'empire', resulting factionalism, and rise of new dynasties), the emphasis was shifting from the enquiry into nature and the cosmos, to more applied insights into human behaviour and society (ethics and politics), even if they were presented as based on universal explanations of the universe. The Peripatos seems to have lost influence, if it ever had any, once the Stoics appeared on the scene (ca. 300 BCE), primarily because the latter were more successful in offering a practical guide to life. The Stoics had a demanding agenda, which integrated physics, ethics, and metaphysics, but it offered important opportunities to test and develop both the broader framework and the details of Aristotle's ideas.

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The immediate successors of Aristotle set about their task in various ways. Consolidation was one of the important strategies to maintain 'market position' against a growing number of competitors. Interestingly, the individual responses to the work of the school founder were critical as well as expansive. The school had at its heart a body of writings that would acquire canonical status by the mid-first century BCE—the moment when Andronicus of Rhodes put together the surviving works, brought to Rome by Sulla in 85 BCE, into an 'edition'.⁴⁵ The activities of the Peripatetics before Andronicus make more sense if they are seen not merely as interpreting Aristotle's work but as *continuing* it. To be sure, there are certain themes and approaches (often exemplifying a contrast with Stoicism), such as the pursuit of moderation

rather than exclusion of the passions, the insufficiency of virtue for happiness, a sharper distinction between the heavens and the sublunary region, that are characteristic of the Peripatetic school throughout and thus give the school a unified base.⁴⁶ But we do not want to offer a trivial answer to the question ‘what is a Peripatetic?’ by saying ‘a member of the Peripatos’. The issue is clearly more complex, and should be scrutinised in relation to questions of allegiance and canonisation: the extent to which someone *declares themselves* a follower of Aristotle and how as a result they help to consolidate his work, thus contributing to the establishment of a fixed body of knowledge (which one might label ‘Aristotelianism’). Both points will be taken up in the chapters to follow. I give special attention to the relationship between the ‘heirs’ and the school’s founder, but also with regard to the rival schools in the hope that a contextualised picture of the school’s character will emerge.

Structure of this book

As is clear from the table of contents, this book avoids a purely chronological treatment for the Peripatetic school, which would be quite unattractive: the available material is patchy at times and not always easy to present as coherent and engaging. Instead a broad thematic arrangement will allow us to take into account major shifts in the philosophical interests which often occur under the influence of political and cultural pressures. Chapters 2–4 represent the most important areas of study among the Peripatetics, while [Chapters 5](#) and [6](#) deal with questions of intellectual coherence pertaining to debates internal to the school and to polemic with competing philosophies outside the Peripatos. A rough chronological ordering *within* the chapters will allow for a certain ease of progression. Some repetition across the chapters will be unavoidable, mainly as a result of the intention to create relatively independent narratives (especially Chapters 2–4), so that readers can access chapters without always necessarily reading all the preceding ones. For some exceptional cases (e.g. Theophrastus’ *Metaphysics*) the discussion is distributed across several chapters in line with the multi-faceted nature of the subject at issue.

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The chapters that follow this general introduction will explore general and specific aspects of the school (origin, nature, structure, practices) and the philosophical ideas, both as viewed from within the school and in relation to the other schools of thought. This leads to an organisation which moves through the philosophical areas, physics, and metaphysics ([Chapter 2](#)), logic and language ([Chapter 3](#)), and then moves on to discussing ethics and politics ([Chapter 4](#)), ending with two chapters that take a look at the internal debates ([Chapter 5](#)) and the intellectual context, that is, the interactions with rival

schools ([Chapter 6](#)). The last chapter offers some reflections on the Peripatetic tradition as a whole.

In short, this book offers an introduction to the Peripatetic school after Aristotle up to the great commentator of his works, Alexander of Aphrodisias. Alexander of Aphrodisias stands at the end of the post-Classical period of Aristotelianism and also marks the transition to the new exegetical tradition of Aristotle's thought in late Antiquity. Within these chronological limits the book examines whether the internal dynamics of this philosophical school allowed for a unity of Peripatetic thought, or whether there was a fundamental tension between philosophical creativity and the dynamisms of core teachings and canonisation. Every attempt has been made to offer a novel survey of this important philosophical tradition in an accessible way. The book also discusses the major philosophical preoccupations of the Peripatetics, the interactions with Hellenistic schools of thought, and the shift in focus among Greek philosophers in a changing political landscape.

As a brief history of ancient Aristotelianism, this book intends to contribute some new insights into this intellectual movement by highlighting its progression, the cultural contexts it evolved in, and the factors that contributed to its development. This philosophical movement or school of thought, which came to be known as 'Aristotelianism', was for a while overshadowed by competing philosophies, but would dominate Arabic and European thought from the eighth to the seventeenth centuries. It will, however, be crucial to avoid retrojecting the weight of its later influence onto the ancient history of the school members. At different stages in the time frame under review they seem to have regarded Aristotle's writings as important starting points for pondering and clarifying the physical world, its hidden foundations, the human aspects of life, and the importance of clear and valid reasoning about all these matters.

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Sources for the Peripatos

I want to end this introductory chapter with a quick survey of the most important sources and their characteristics. As in any study of antiquity, the nature of the sources is a crucial factor in determining what we know with certainty and how the manner of transmission may create problems of interpretation. Modern scholarship plays a part in this. When the German scholar Regenbogen gave a masterful snapshot of Theophrastean studies (*RE*, Supplement volume VII [1940][47](#)), he already noted the negative tone of Zeller in the description of Theophrastus, reproving him for giving a mere list of

deviations from Aristotle's doctrines.⁴⁸ He also pointed to the recognition which Cicero gave Theophrastus—something which was hardly ever acknowledged (ibid. 1547.14–15).⁴⁹

The orator and statesman **Cicero** (106–44 BCE) had a significant role as a translator and interpreter of Greek philosophy in the late Roman Republic. As Runia put it, 'For the student of ancient philosophy the reading of the works of Cicero is like reaching the light after passing through a long dark tunnel'.⁵⁰ But it is not easy to measure his influence on his contemporaries or subsequent ages, because he had a selective taste for Peripatetic material and was sometimes wrong in assessing the works he was reading as genuine. The works that possess clear Peripatetic content fall into two categories: they either include materials of various origins or they discuss in detail a specific part of Peripatetic philosophy. For the first kind we may refer to the *Tusculan Disputations*, in which Cicero lines up a whole host of ideas about emotions (fear, grief, anger) from the Stoics, Epicureans, and Peripatetics. An example of the second kind is his work on ethics, *On the Ends of Good and Evil* (*De finibus bonorum et malorum*, short *De fin.*), where in book five (esp. §§9–12) he seems to have had access to a well-informed source, given that the achievements of Aristotle and his followers are detailed with a focus on rhetoric and moral questions.⁵¹ We know about his interest in philosophy at different stages of his life from his letters and other comments in his writings.

As to the mistaken identification of Peripatetic writings, he famously declared in his own work *Topica* that he had read Aristotle's work on dialectic (*Topika*), but what he says about the content has very little to do with the work that we now possess with that title.⁵² Scholars have speculated whether he meant another work or that he may have relied too much on memory (he was, according to the opening pages, on a boat while he wrote his work in response to Aristotle's). In his letters he reveals knowledge of many other Peripatetics (Dicaearchus, Critolaus, Cratippus). All this indicates that Cicero was very important for the dissemination of Greek philosophical views, but that some caution is required since he regularly presents their views from a particular agenda pursued in the works in which they are quoted or paraphrased.

Arius (or Areius) Didymus was a philosopher at the court of Augustus (if our sources can be trusted) and he was perhaps the same Arius who consoled Livia at the death of her son campaigning in Germany (Seneca, *Consolation addressed to Marcia* 4–5).

From the late first to the third century CE a highly literate book culture developed, in which well-educated orators and philosophers with a keen

interest in the classical canon of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE undertook to study and emulate the literature, rhetoric, and philosophy. Of particular interest is **Plutarch of Chaeronea**, a Platonist who wrote biographies with a moral focus and philosophical essays on a wide range of topics, which include various comments on the Peripatetics. One work in particular has recently been scrutinised for its Peripatetic content⁵³: the so-called *Table Talks* (in Greek: *sumpotika zêtêmata*; in Latin: *Quaestiones Conviviales*), a genre which reflects the contemporary polite dinner conversations, perhaps a distant precursor of the later French *salons* conversations. A similar work of the same period is the *Sophists at Dinner* (Greek: *Deipnosophists*) by **Athenaeus**, in which a group of intellectuals discuss a kaleidoscopic range of topics, based on a stunning number of other books. The physician **Sextus Empiricus** (second or third century CE), himself a Pyrrhonian Skeptic, also provides some important information on epistemology.

Diogenes Laertius' *Lives* (usually dated to the early third century CE) presents us with the lists of writings and brief sketches of Peripatetic lives in his fifth book (the work has a total of ten books covering all the Greek philosophical schools). A most valuable source, but also one that we should use with caution. DL is not a philosopher and where we have other sources for the same material, it becomes apparent that he often gets things slightly wrong on representing doctrines.⁵⁴ His account of Aristotle's ideas is a compressed and at times misleading summary of the main philosophical views. Some weaknesses arise from his ignorance of certain parts of the corpus: he was not aware of the content of Aristotle's *Analytics* even if he refers to them, nor does he know of the *Categories* or the *On Interpretation* as part of the *Organon*.⁵⁵ That said, we should also make allowances for the fact that he used many other sources from the Hellenistic period several centuries earlier, so there will be valuable information in his reports, while it is not impossible that certain mistakes originated in the works he excerpted.

Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 200 CE) offers doctrinal discussions in his commentaries on logic, metaphysics, and perception with a sympathetic eye for Aristotelian views. But we know that he does not always agree with Aristotle, even if he wants us to believe that his elaborations are logical expansions of Aristotle's views. Such an approach was recently labelled 'creative exegesis'.⁵⁶

Stobaeus (fifth century CE) has preserved important materials of Peripatetic ethics based on one **Arius Didymus**, a philosopher of the late first century BCE. In *Eclogae II* he recounts a summary of Stoic and Peripatetic ethics.

Later Platonists such as **Porphyrus** (late third to early fourth centuries), **Ammonius** (fourth century), **Proclus** (fifth century), **Simplicius** and **Damascius** (sixth century) showed a considerable interest in the Aristotelians, for two main reasons: firstly, they considered Aristotle more or less a Platonist;

secondly, his immediate successors offered useful assistance in the exegetical project they had set themselves, namely, to show that Aristotle and Plato were in principle in agreement. Of special importance for Theophrastus is **Priscian of Lydia**, a contemporary of Simplicius, who provides us with important evidence for his ideas on sense perception. In the case of Theophrastus many medieval sources also feature in FHSG, as do some Arabic sources, but their value is not always easy to assess.

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With all these writers we should take into account that many had their own reasons for discussing Aristotelian philosophers. In other words, their agenda was often not motivated by historicity or truthfulness, but by biographical, anecdotal, or polemical interests.

Notes

- 1 I here echo the title of John Dillon's book about Plato's Academy (*The Heirs of Plato*, Oxford 2003) to pay tribute to it and because the notion of 'heirs' is a very apposite one. His work has served me as a model in its structure and conciseness.
- 2 There are a few small exceptions, depending on how we define 'work' and 'fragment' (e.g. Nicolaus of Damascus' biography of Augustus is quite a sizable text, Malitz 2003). While distinction between a (complete) work and a lengthy fragment is not always clear, I use fragments as a term for texts which are clearly a part of a larger text, whether extant or not (e.g. short quotation, paragraph, or a few pages).
- 3 Lynch's account of the school (1972) as an educational institution is still useful, but could not benefit from the Project Theophrastus' series of new fragment editions and discussions (1983–2016). I exclude Grayeff 1974, whose account is now outdated and in some points misleading.
- 4 Themistius *Orations* 21, 255b. Cf. Lynch 1972, 136–8, Düring 1957, 404–11.
- 5 Antigonos of Carysthus in Athenaeus *Sophists at Dinner* 12.69, 547E; Lucian *Pisc.* 43.
- 6 Fortenbaugh notes (2012: 359 in MM and M) that Chamaeleon is called a Peripatetic (*Peripatētikos*) in Tatian *Oration to the Greeks* 31 (= Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 10.11.13 = fr. 15 MM and M) and may have attended lectures, but that training in the Peripatos is doubtful (id. n. 1 following Wehrli 1957, 69).
- 7 Plutarch, *On exile* 14.
- 8 Karamanolis 2006: 332, n. 8. Karamanolis also argues that Aristotle may still have regarded himself a Platonist in many respects, and was certainly closer to Plato than the early successors Speusippus and Xenocrates, with whom he disagreed.
- 9 The modern word *Lyceum* derives from *Lykeion*, and is still the term used for secondary schools in some parts of the world (e.g. French *Lycée*; Dutch *Lyceum*), thus evoking certain unwarranted associations of a well-organised institution with a building. I prefer to use *Lykeion* in the present context.
- 10 Recently this has been argued with regard to Theophrastus on the basis of joint transmission of manuscripts: Hecquet-Devienne 2004.

- 11 The pointed characterisation is taken from Dodds 1923, 10.
 - 12 Karamanolis 2006, 331. Sedley (1997, 98) claims that the same holds for the Stoics with regard to Zeno: 'Zeno . . . seems to have been an inspirational rather than a systematic teacher, leaving vast areas of unclarity about his teachings for his successors to illuminate, and much virgin territory, including logic, for them to colonize.'
 - 13 For instance, in the *Vita Aristotelis Hesychii* 9 (fr. 4A) a sequence of scholars is given which is clearly inconsistent with other important evidence (Strato fr. 1 Sharples = fr. 10 W.; Aristo fr. 4B = Clement of Alexandria, *Patchwork* 1.14.63.5 has a different sequence). Wehrli (*Lykon und Ariston von Keos* 1952, p. 49) concluded that a general list of Peripatetics was inserted into the list of scholars, which is probable, but not enough to explain the confusion.
- p.22
- 14 Gottschalk 2000: 367. See also Haake 2007, Scholz 1998 on the public role of philosophers.
 - 15 E.g. Elias (David) *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories* 117, 22–23.
 - 16 See Baltussen 2008, Sharples 2012, Griffin 2015.
 - 17 Cicero, *De fin.* 5. 12 (= 2H SHARPLES). In his *Letter to Atticus* 4. 16. 2 (not in SHARPLES) Cicero reveals that Aristotle wrote introductions to each book of an exoteric work.
 - 18 The geographic origins of Greek intellectuals is usefully mapped in Grant 1971, 37–8.
 - 19 On the religious aspects see Lynch 1972, 4–5, 9–29 (sanctuary).
 - 20 DL 5.36 calls him 'a man of remarkable intelligence and industry' (the Greek words here are superlatives), as well as 'kind and scholarly' (*euergetikos kai philologos*).
 - 21 Regenbogen 1940, 1554.3–7 described him as a scholar who shows signs of resignation that a full synthesis of an increasing body of knowledge was no longer possible ('T[heophrast] . . . mit dem wachsenden Erkenntnisumfang eine leichte Resignation bezüglich der Möglichkeit letzter synthetischer Erkenntnisse verbindet') (with special reference to Simplicius *Comm. on Phys.* 18,32 = fr. 142 FHSG).
 - 22 Sharples 1998, 36.
 - 23 See esp. Fortenbaugh 1984 for ethics, Barnes 1985 for logic, and ch. 3 and 4 respectively.
 - 24 See Lynch 1972, 101–2.
 - 25 Engels in Hellmann and Mirhady (2015) fr. 1, p. 13n2.
 - 26 Fortenbaugh and White (2004) fr. 1 White = fr. 15 W. For Plato's will, see DL 3. 41–43; for Epicurus DL 10. 1–16.
 - 27 O'Sullivan 2009.
 - 28 Essential works on Aristoxenus and ancient music are by Andrew Barker, *Greek Musical Writings*, vol. 2: *Harmonic and Acoustic Theory* (Cambridge, 1989), and id. *The Science of Harmonics in Classical Greece* (Cambridge, 2007). Cf. Pearson 1990.
 - 29 On a recent discussion of book production and the book trade see Johnson 2010. Chrysippus is also said to have written 500 lines a day (DL 7. 181).
 - 30 Gottschalk 1980. Reviews by A. A. Long, *Classical Review* 32 (1982) 200–2, J. D. G. Evans, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982) 250, J. Scarborough, *The Classical Journal*, 79.2 (1984) 167–71, J. Mansfeld, *Mnemosyne* 38 (1985) 202–8.
 - 31 But peculiarities remain. For instance, Gottschalk admits (p. 9) that Heraclides' dialogues were structured by way of *speeches* for and against a topic, unlike those of Plato (as with

many of his followers), but very much like those of Aristotle (as implied in Cic. *De or.* 3. 80). Heraclides' unusual theory of 'continuous particles' (*anarmoi onkoí*) may, according to Gottschalk, have some connection to the Platonic construct of layered physical objects (consisting of *invisible* triangles which combine to *visible* polyhedra). But the connection to the 'particle theory' of the physician Asclepiades (ca. 125–40 BCE) is, as Evans points out in his review [n. 30] (1982: 250), rather sudden in Gottschalk's argument, and as Scarborough notes in his review [n. 30], the treatment of the medical theory is also unsatisfactory (Scarborough 1984: 168). Moreover, the notion itself of particles seems to fit the kind of inter-school debate of the late fourth century (Gottschalk, 55), much like the corpuscularian theory of Strato and Hieronymus (admittedly not exactly the same and both are of course also un-Aristotelian). The matter does not seem quite as resolved as some have thought.

32 See Gottschalk 1980, 3–5.

33 For the provocative thesis that Aristotle can rightly be considered a Platonist, see Gerson 2005 (according to his ch. 9 title, 'Platonist *malgré lui?*', i.e. Platonist *despite himself*; G. Boys-Stones sounds a critical note on how this risks overlooking those Platonists who were not harmonisers, *The Classical Review* 56 (2006) 62). Gerson's reading is very much inspired by the Neoplatonists who also saw Aristotle and his followers as Platonists. This view explains their attempts at harmonising Plato and Aristotle, often by showing how the supposed differences depended on superficial linguistic or conceptual distinctions. Gerson rightly points out that 'harmonising' does not mean 'agree on everything'.

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34 Hutchinson and Ransom 2015. Cf. Gottschalk 1980, 29.

35 White 2001, 197.

36 White 2001, 198.

37 White 2001, 206.

38 About his supposed 'orthodoxy' and anti-Stoic attitude, see Sharples 2010a, 155 and ch. 5, n. 39 with text.

39 Griffin 2015, 23–29. Fuller discussion of the sources in Brink 1940, Moraux 1973, Barnes 1997. For a different view on the 'edition', see also Hatzimichaeli 2013, Primavesi 2007.

40 The only recent discussion of his commentary is the collection of essays edited by A. Alberti and R. W. Sharples, eds., *Aspasius: The Earliest Extant Commentary on Aristotle's Ethics* (1999).

41 Sharples 1987 for an overview. See also Sharples 2001, 2005, 2012b.

42 Gottschalk 2000, 380.

43 *De fin.* 5.14: *praetereo multos, in his doctum et suavem, Hieronymum, quem iam cur Peripateticum appellem nescio. summum enim bonum exposuit vacuitatem doloris; qui autem de summo bono dissentit de tota philosophia ratione dissentit.* Similar judgement regarding Critolaus in this passage.

44 Cicero informs us about his style, which he describes as 'a golden flow of speech' (*Ac. Pr.* 38. 199). For further examples see Guthrie 1990, 57.

45 A disputed label (hence my quotation marks). I shall return to it briefly in [Chapter 3](#), n. 29, and [Chapter 5](#).

46 I should like to acknowledge the helpful comments I received from the late Robert Sharples (d. 2010) in clarifying the issues discussed in this section during the preparation

of this book.

- 47 Esp. in the summary ('Zusammenfassung') *RE Suppl.* 7, 1536–61 at 1547–8. The whole summary is worth revisiting (Regenbogen is quite critical of Zeller); he also gives a summary of the new appreciation since Brink's *RE* article s.v. 'Peripatos' (1550. 55 ff).
- 48 In his words: 'was er gibt, ist in der Hauptsache eine Doxographie der bezeugten Abweichungen von Aristoteles' (*op. cit.* 1547. 2–4). Zeller was of course not wrong, but his account lacks balance.
- 49 For a similar positive judgement of Theophrastus, see ch. 4. [Libanius]
- 50 Runia 1989, 25.
- 51 Steinmetz 1989 (in Fortenbaugh and Steinmetz 1989), 14–17; 19.
- 52 See Huby 2007.
- 53 F. Klotz and K. Oikonomopoulou (eds). *The Philosopher's Banquet. Plutarch's Table Talk in the Intellectual Culture of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2011).
- 54 An important and balanced study of DL and his sources is Mejer 1978, but more work on Diogenes' method is still needed.
- 55 SHARPLES, p. 33.
- 56 Mansfeld 1994, 155–61.

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Further readings

A revised overview of the Peripatos can be found in Wehrli, Wöhrle, and Zhmud 2004. For the survival of Hellenistic philosophical texts Mansfeld 1999c is the best guide; for chronology Dorandi 1999. Accessible studies of the Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics are A. A. Long 1974 (Duckworth) and Sharples 1996 (Routledge). A good analysis of DL book 5 is M. Sollenberger ANRW II 36.6 (1992), 3793–879.

2 The natural world and its (hidden) foundations

Aristotle's treatment of the natural world was systematic in its outlook and ambitious in its scope. He wrote many original and penetrating studies on natural phenomena and their underlying causes. The two areas dealing with nature and its underlying causes are generally referred to as 'physics' and 'metaphysics' respectively. Aristotle himself did not use the term 'metaphysics', but called this subject 'first philosophy', or 'the science of Being *qua* Being' (*Metaph.* 4.1, more on these phrases below). Aristotle's writings are in fact strongly grounded in his empirical work, an interest which may well have been stimulated by his father, who was a physician.¹ Thus Aristotle's work grew out of a primary interest in biology and empirical research into nature. But his more fundamental questions would consider the non-physical, such as moral principles, the meaning of being *qua* being, and the idea that concepts help us categorise and understand the world by types rather than their instantiations, that is, by inquiring into not just the concrete, but also the abstract. Part of his theoretical analysis of the world involved responding critically to early Greek and Platonic views, while also incorporating some of their ideas into a new theoretical framework. Like Plato, he wanted to build a comprehensive system by using both traditional and novel elements, but often he reached very different outcomes.

Aristotle's use of material principles and metaphysical underpinnings, presupposing an ontology based on ten general 'categories' or 'modes of being', gave his theory analytical clarity and coherence (see also [Chapter 3](#)). His strong interest in biology made him focus on the development of living beings and from his studies such as *Investigation of Animals* (*HA*) he came up with the notion of teleology, that is, that most things have a *telos*, a 'built-in' purpose or end. This notion of teleology is present in much of his thinking; the *telos* for humans is the point of maturity (as reached in one's early twenties). More unusually, he would declare this final 'stage' or endpoint a factor which exerted an influence on the development itself, a driving force behind it, or more accurately, a 'cause' (*aition*). Here it helps to realise that the Greek word

ation can mean both ‘responsible for’ and ‘cause of’. He refers to it as the ‘final cause’, that is, a cause which ‘pushes’ a thing to its endpoint.

Aristotle’s decision to make use of four main causes in his overall physical theory seems traditional, given that Empedocles had already used four elements for his cosmological theory. But it concerns in fact a serious rewrite of the concept of causality. Of the four causes he describes, only two were discovered by his predecessors, but not, as he put it, ‘in a clear way’ (*Metaph.* 1.4, 985a13; cf. 987a10), since they ‘spoke without clear articulation’ (*Metaph.* 1.10, 993a15). But Aristotle did make a few concessions towards them: he admitted that most early Greek philosophers (the so-called Presocratics) did speak of a ‘material cause’, since they decided on one particular material stuff (matter) to explain all change in nature (*Phys.* 1.3–8; *Metaph.* 1.2–10). Empedocles did have a comprehensive theory with four elements as causal forces (and the more abstract Love and Hate to bring them together or separate them). But Aristotle believed that most only talked about ‘generation and destruction’ (*Metaph.* 1.8, 989b22–24), that is, *physical* processes of change. His own notion of material cause was more complex: it also allowed for abstract concepts to be the underlying ‘material’ for other abstract concepts (e.g. genus for a species). Plato and the Pythagoreans received more credit for at least making a distinction between objects connected to the senses and those connected to the intellect and attempting to cover the whole of reality (*Metaph.* 1.8, 989b25–27).²

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In this chapter we will take a brief look at what his successors had available for evaluating and developing Aristotle’s physics and metaphysics, and how they did so.³ In other words, we will ask: what did they think could (or should) be done to bring these subjects forward? In their own way the most talented among his early students, Theophrastus, Strato, and Eudemos, were grappling with both large and small questions in Aristotelian physics (which itself is always presupposed—see Introduction p. 5 [Theophr. fr. 72A]). Whenever they disagree with him, they express themselves in a muted way at first: but while noting difficulties early on, they soon started proposing alternative theories, some of which diverged considerably from those of the school founder.⁴ The extant fragments of many of his successors show engagement with important issues in the treatises (on principles, terminology, and coherence), but also consider the consequences of new empirical findings.

The history (and historiography) of natural philosophy

In line with Aristotle’s approach of opening his works with overviews of

existing opinions as a preparation for his own analysis (cf. ch. 1, n. 16), several of the early Peripatetics wrote retrospective surveys of known views in particular fields. Theophrastus occupied himself with his predecessors in natural philosophy (preserved in fragments and one work on sense perception⁵), Menon did so in medical history, Eudemus in geometry and astronomy, and Aristoxenus in music. In this way former achievements would be subjected to methodical assessment against Peripatetic criteria, making philosophical enterprise a continuous discourse, even if on Peripatetic terms. Fortunately for us, this approach also preserved many of these views for posterity.

What did this mean for the approach in Peripatetic research? It is worth pausing over the broader perspective taken by Aristotle and his successors towards their predecessors. Cosmology and natural philosophy had first featured in Hesiod's mythical accounts of gods and the *cosmogony* (ca. 750 BCE), but the early Greek thinkers in Asia Minor were the first to offer serious rational explanations. Aristotle (and, as is clear from the *Timaeus*, Plato, too) had made an effort to assess their achievements before moving on to develop the subject further.⁶ He may have coined the word *kosmopoia*, 'cosmic creation' (*Metaph.* 985a19), although a comment in his *Physics* (*Phys.* 196a22) ('he [Empedocles] says in his cosmogony that "it happened to run that way at that time, but it often ran otherwise"') seems to suggest that Empedocles may well have been the originator of the term.

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The observation that their own work was in a sense a continuation of what had come before may seem obvious and almost trivial to us today, but Aristotle and his successors had in fact a considered view about such an evolution of ideas and provided a justification for this approach. The framing of Aristotle's 'historiography' of philosophy, though not actually historical in outlook, determined how he would proceed, in three ways: (1) it offered a first demarcation of the project's scope; (2) it influenced which questions he would ask and which answers he would consider plausible; and (3) it generally set the pathway for a more abstract analysis of both the living and the inert world around us. In other words, Aristotle had given his own place in the development of Greek philosophy some serious thought, and had come up with a methodological statement as to how to evaluate and incorporate the ideas of his predecessors vis-à-vis his own contribution. This he did mostly by evaluating their solutions to certain problems (e.g. *Top.* A.2 [see below]; *Metaph.* A.1 and B; *De caelo* A.10), sometimes declaring them useful, at other times invalid. And it is with this methodology in mind that his collaborators and successors also came to review previous achievements in specific areas.

Theophrastus' critical evaluations of earlier philosophers (especially Presocratics and Platonists) are found in several of his smaller works, most particularly in the treatise *On sensation*, which is believed to be part of a larger work (perhaps his *Physical Opinions*, DL 5. 48, or his *Reply to Natural Philosophers*, DL 5. 46, see also fr. 241A FHSG). These works illustrate important aspects of his methodology and influence on the (early) history of philosophy. Not only do they show an increased awareness of the philosophical enterprise as an ongoing discourse which can preserve methodical innovations and assess past achievements, but they also reveal, through his criticisms and convenient organisation of materials, the reason for his impact on following ages. Although its dissemination cannot be traced in every detail, his work in this area enhanced the consolidation and preservation of philosophical debates in the Hellenistic schools. The Stoics and Epicureans also adopted an approach which showed 'historical' awareness, though not in the same systematic way as the Peripatetics.⁷ As a result, we need to be aware that the pre-Aristotelian material often comes to us by way of the Peripatetic perspective on their views and achievements. Fortunately, in many cases we have some quotations and ancient judgements which survive via another route, allowing us to reach a less one-sided understanding of their ideas.

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Aristotle's *Physics*: principles

It will be useful to present the central ideas of Aristotle here in a nutshell to prepare the way for our exploration of his successors. The advantage of Aristotle's physical system is that his description of nature (*physis*) aims at (and often reaches) a conceptual unity by using abstract concepts such as motion, causes, and principles in explaining the natural processes. Aristotle's theoretical grasp of natural processes was one based in empirical reality, ranging from studies into biology, medicine, sensation, astronomy, and meteorology, to physics proper.⁸ The descriptive terms used for these fields of study are modern ones, but he made inroads into all of these areas with a keen eye for basic patterns and fundamental principles in a way that was unprecedented. Here is a selection from the list of his works (DL 5. 22–27):

On Elements, three books (5. 23)

Of Sciences, one book

Of Motion, one book

On Nature, three books (DL 5. 25)

Concerning Nature, one book

Extracts from the Timaeus and from the Works of Archytas, one book

A Response to the Writings of Melissus, one book

A Response to the Writings of Alcmaeon, one book

A Response to the Pythagoreans, one book

A Response to the Writings of Xenophanes, one book

A Response to the Writings of Zeno, one book

On the Pythagoreans, one book

On Animals, nine books

Eight books of *Dissections*

A Selection of Dissections, one book

On Composite Animals, one book

On Sterility, one book

On Plants, one book

Two books concerning *Medicine*

Prognostics of Storms, one book

Concerning Memory

Concerning Astronomy (DL 5. 26)

Concerning Optics

Thirty-eight books of *Physics*

On the Magnet, one book

Problems taken from the Works of Democritus, two books

Aristotle's range of interests emerges from this partial list, even without his other works on biology, literature, rhetoric, metaphysics, and logic.⁹ The works starting with 'A Response to' probably include polemical arguments against the natural philosophers mentioned and show how much past achievements

preoccupied him in his own studies of a subject area, in particular when they shared views.¹⁰ He famously claimed:

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The true and the approximately true are apprehended by the same faculty. It may be noted that men have a sufficient natural instinct for what is true, and usually do arrive at the truth. Hence the man who makes a good guess at the truth is likely to make a good guess at what is generally accepted.

(*Rhet.* 1355a14–15)

In his work on dialectical argument he gave, almost as an afterthought, his view on how to collect and organise existing views on a particular subject (*Topics* 105b12–19; trans. Loeb, modified):

We ought also to select from written disquisitions and make up descriptions of each class of subject, putting them in separate lists, for example, about ‘the good’ or about ‘living beings’, dealing with every kind of good, beginning with the essence (*apo tou ti estin*). We ought also to note alongside the opinion of individuals, for example that Empedocles said that the elements of bodies are four in number; for one may accept the statement of a thinker of repute (*tinis endoxou*).

Clearly Aristotle believed that the progression of knowledge is, to a certain extent, a shared undertaking to which many could contribute. But this position would certainly not excuse a researcher from the responsibility of sorting the true from the false. Let us now go over some of the basic concepts in physics as a preparation for the study of the attitudes and responses of his intellectual heirs.

Ta *Physika*: (a) motion, (b) body, (c) place, (d) time, (e) soul and prime mover

The study of the natural world was of course not new by the time Aristotle undertook his own researches. He did much to understand the animate world with important works on animals and humans. Consequently, a core notion of Aristotelian physics is motion (*kinêsis*).¹¹ To explain how this phenomenon directed growth, change, and alteration of natural things (plants, animals), Aristotle needed to untangle several important concepts, which had already featured in earlier discussions of nature, in particular body, weight, place, and time. His own theory offered many modifications and alternatives to existing ones, which we can trace in his usual preparatory surveys of his predecessors (*On the soul* A.2–5; *On the Heaven* A.10; *Physics* A.3–10; *Metaphysics* A.1–8).

His critical comments and new proposals will be summarised presently. But

we first should briefly consider why the last item in the heading, soul, belongs to this context: why did he treat soul as part of physics? Aristotle's answer is simple and straightforward: the soul was considered a self-mover, the cause of motion for living beings (i.e. defined by motion), so it characteristically belonged to the domain of the physical phenomena, including its typical functions of perception, thinking, and understanding. He probably inherited the notion of a self-mover from Plato (cf. *Phaedrus* 245c–246e), but he can also claim to be consistent with his own criterion that motion characterises all natural living things.

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How did his overall principles explain how nature works? A particular strength of his works on nature is the grasp of fundamental issues. As a rule he quickly identified and defined important concepts, in this case by focusing on causes, change, motion, place, time, bodies, and the most fundamental question of all, the beginning of everything (prime mover). The Platonist commentator Simplicius tells us that Aristotle's immediate successor Theophrastus divided the *Physics* into two main parts (*Comm. on Phys.* 923,7–8; cf. 1358,8–10): he regarded books 1–5 as dealing with principles—a view Simplicius, writing in the sixth century, also attributed to the second century CE Peripatetic Adrastus (*in Phys.* 6,4–10)—while books 6–8 were on 'motion' (*kinēsis* 'motion' in the generic sense of 'change'). This book division was a matter of some dispute in the later tradition, and Simplicius knows of two views: the division of distinct books was already established and the *Physics* was divided by some as 'five books *On natural principles*, and three *On motion*' (*in Phys.* 6,5–10 Adrastus; cf. 801,13–16 'Aristotle and the associates of Aristotle', 1358,8–9), while others chose a four–four division (see e.g. *in Phys.* 802,8–11, 'Porphyry . . . wisely reports on the division of the eight books, namely that all call the <first> five [books] *Physics*, the <next> three *On Motion*, [but that] he himself still says that the four books from the fifth to the eighth coming after constitute the treatise on motion and is entitled idiosyncratically *On Motion*'). This debate in the later Platonist tradition illustrates the difficulty for later readers to assess which broader structure Aristotle himself intended this work to have.

While cherry-picking from Presocratic and Platonic ideas, Aristotle examined nature within the 'sublunar domain' (earth), where general regularities ('laws') can be observed ('laws' of motion) and which is determined primarily by motion and change. The Greek word *kinesis* (unlike 'kinetic' in English) can cover both meanings. He also assumed that this world occupies a place and has solid bodies in it, some of which are ensouled (*Phys.* 3.1; *De an.* 1.3; 2.1). Ensouled beings are self-movers (and self-replicators), features which ensure the survival and continuity of species (*HA* propagation book 5; book 7; psychical activity book 8).

This thumbnail summary illustrates clearly how Aristotle's grand scheme is based on successful generalisation: although adopting some ideas and hypotheses from his predecessors, Aristotle crafted a *system* which was intended to be comprehensive and consistent. It may be objected that the Presocratics and Plato had a similar aim, but Aristotle was clearly more successful—at least to his own satisfaction. That Aristotle's system is to some extent aspirational should not stand in the way of appreciating how important a step this was in reaching a deeper understanding of the world.

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Aristotle's successors were heirs to this intellectual edifice and continued to add, review, and correct it. As indicated in the [Chapter 1](#), they did not yet regard the treatises and lecture notes as a fixed corpus or 'canon', which was not to be changed or expanded. Rather we should see their activities as complementary and collaborative. As the most fundamental concepts of Aristotelian physics, motion, place, and time attracted considerable attention among his successors.

As Aristotle's first successor, Theophrastus of Eresus (ca. 365–280 BCE) came to hold the leadership role in the school after Aristotle chose him over Eudemus of Rhodes (see quotation below). The rather charming story that the succession was decided on Aristotle's deathbed is probably apocryphal, but it may yet be of some use. It tells us something about the way in which the school leader tried to preserve continuity. Theophrastus had been Aristotle's student and collaborator for nearly 40 years and was therefore eminently qualified to continue the work. In later authors he is given several labels that confirm his importance: 'leader of his students',¹² 'best among students', and together with Eudemus as 'companions'.¹³ The anecdote also informs us about the fact that the position was sought after, given that there were several candidates for the role of school leader (Aristoxenus was another potential candidate for the succession). In Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights* 13.5.1–12 (fr. 8 FHSG) we read:

When the philosopher Aristotle was almost 62 years old, he was sick and feeble in body and had slim hope of (longer) life. At that time the whole company of his followers approached him, praying and begging that he should select a successor to his position and office with whom they might associate after his final day . . . There were many good men in the school, but two were preeminent, Theophrastus and Eudemus. These men surpassed the others in talent and learning (*ingenio hi atque doctrinis ceteros praestabant*). A short time later . . . he said that the wine he had been drinking was not in accord with his health, but unwholesome and sour, and for this reason an exotic wine should be looked for, either from Rhodos [Eudemus' home] or Lesbos [Theophrastus' home]. He asked them to secure both kinds for him and said he would take the one which helped him more.

Aristotle goes on to taste both and declare both wines excellent but the

Lesbian ‘more pleasant’. Gellius presents this anecdote as an example of Aristotle’s tact (*elegans verecundia*), and if the story is true, he may well be right. Thus Theophrastus was left with the task of keeping the school going and with it the vast range of projects Aristotle had started in an attempt to chart all human knowledge.

From the remains of his works we can learn much about his preoccupations and engagement with Aristotle.¹⁴ The new fragment edition (Fortenbaugh, Huby, Sharples, and Gutas 1992) has facilitated considerable progress in our knowledge of the second scholarch, and will, in the words of Jørgen Mejer, ‘confirm that Theophrastus . . . is a philosopher well worth dragging out of Aristotle’s shadow’.¹⁵ Mejer considered this worth emphasising, because the traditional view has been that Theophrastus simply followed his master and added little to the philosophical thought of the school.

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Theophrastus did indeed follow Aristotle’s views in many respects (fr. 151B FHSG), but in the process of studying his natural philosophy chose to expand and adjust where he felt the need. He made a range of small adjustments, such as the privileging of fire over the three other elements (*On fire* 1), but also bringing earth, water, and air closer together, as representing instantiations of ‘the cold’ in opposition to ‘the hot’ (fire).¹⁶ His independence of thought should not be doubted, even if he writes in terms which may look to us tentative: his cautious mode of expression and the aporetic style are in part the result of his teaching activity.¹⁷ His disagreement with Aristotle on fundamental issues in metaphysics, meteorology, and biology (to name a few) have more recently been acknowledged as perceptive evaluations of the Aristotelian system. Some examples of these revisionary proposals will be discussed in [Chapter 5](#).

Like Aristotle, Theophrastus attributes order and regularity to nature, claiming it ‘does nothing in vain’ (*CP* 1.1.1; 2.1.1; 4.4.2; *On First Principles* 10a22–5 Gutas), but with certain reservations. He does not shy away from discussing the foundations of physics (its epistemic or constitutive ‘principles’, fr. 142–44 FHSG) and raises questions about what kind of things principles are, how many of them there are, and what their problematic aspects might be. Theophrastus’ acceptance of Aristotle’s framework and principles is balanced by a readiness to expose obscurities and inconsistencies and to correct these whenever necessary, taking later developments and results into account. In addition, Theophrastus greatly valued empirical facts and collected them with eagerness.¹⁸ Last but not least, he was reluctant to generalise, so the generalisations he did articulate were of a tentative nature. These points represent his attempt to find a specific method for particular subjects and

The extant short tract on metaphysics, now considered to be a complete work, can be seen as a critical evaluation of Aristotle (and others), in particular the ‘first things’ or principles, and the unmoved mover. He presents a range of connected problems which are not always clearly resolved (his typical *aporetic* style—in this case perhaps because it is an early work or because it is didactic, or both) and show him preoccupied with the limits of explanation. For instance, it raises questions about what we can assume to be fundamental principles and how many there are, looking at possible options (one or more than one) and their problematic implications. He restricts the number of principles and the scope of their influence in the physical realm (text is quoted below, p. 40). It allows him to keep certain accidental occurrences (e.g. thunder, but also evil) outside the range of events with a final cause. In his botanical works, however, he tries to accommodate anomalies, so they still fit the Aristotelian framework (*Causes of Plants* 5). Obviously this complicates the Aristotelian position that ‘nothing happens in vain’ (see §3), but the idea of a limited teleology or purposiveness (*Metaph.* 7a19–b9, 10a21–23 R.–F.) is confirmed in the Arabic version.²⁰ I will return to a few more details of this work later (below p. 41; [Chapter 3](#), p. 66f).

Responses to Aristotle’s Physics

The way in which the successors responded to some of the fundamental aspects of nature can be briefly discussed by using the surviving fragments. I will take in turn (a) motion, (b) bodies, (c) place, (d) time, (e) the prime mover.²¹ The limitations of the sources will become quite plain, as will the fact that debate on these matters did not stop. For the sake of clarity I will deal with soul and psychology separately after I have dealt with these topics.

(a) *Motion*

On motion was a title for one or several books: as we saw Aristotle’s *Physics* was seen as falling into two parts, ‘on motion’ and ‘on principles’ (either in a 4/4 division, or 5/3). Its central role in the natural world is maintained in Theophrastus: DL 5. 44 reports a title in three books *peri kinêseōs* (*On Motion/Change*). Since the work does not survive we can only speculate about its contents, but the fragmentary remains found in later sources (by way of short paraphrases and quotations) confirm that it dealt with many standard topics much like Aristotle’s work did: the later commentators Themistius, Priscian, and Simplicius refer to individual books and these references allow us to

conclude that book 3 was on motion, books 4–5 discussed perception and the soul. As a fundamental component of the physical world, the role of motion (i.e. locomotion and change) was not challenged.

(b) Body

For Aristotle, a body is a natural substance defined by its material and manner of production. His analysis in *Phys. B* is a fundamental discussion of the nature of causes (both of ‘things’ and events, whether produced deliberately and accidentally—in his terms by ‘intention’ or by ‘chance’, *Phys.* 2.3–6).

In his commentary on Aristotle’s *On the Heaven*, Alexander of Aphrodisias adduced Theophrastus as a witness to justify his reading of *De caelo* as being about ‘the world as a whole’ (*peri kosmou*, *Comm. on On the Heaven* 1,2 Heiberg), even if elsewhere the scope is expanded to include ‘the five bodies of the heaven and the four bodies below the moon’ (cf. *ibid.* 1,10–12). One controversial topic was Aristotle’s fifth heavenly element which was ‘rejected by Strato in the third century BC and by Xenarchus in the first century BC’.²² I will return to these ‘dissenters’ in [Chapter 5](#).

(c) Place

The discussion of place (or space) has received considerable attention in recent studies of Peripatetic physics.²³ We have access to the discussion in the early Peripatos on the basis of the school discussions of the late Platonists such as Plotinus, Proclus, and Simplicius, but it also involved ideas of Simplicius’ teacher, Damascius (ca. 460–540 CE). This multi-layered nature of our sources adds some complexity for this material, but without these sources we would be much worse off.

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Theophrastus raised pertinent objections to Aristotle’s definition of natural place as the inner limit of the surrounding place (*On the Heaven* 310b3; *Physics* 214b12–215a11). What he saw as problematic is the idea that place has some kind of dynamic power which acts as a final cause and makes things go in their place.²⁴ One reason for such a move is that the vacuum alone could not explain this (as atomists claimed). This is intended ‘to make place *explain* (i.e. be the *aitia* or cause of) the natural movements of the elements’²⁵. Theophrastus thought that this is problematic for several reasons: he thought that place may not be surface; that place may not be immobile, and so on. Such puzzles signal quite clearly that Aristotle’s view was considered

unsatisfactory (fr. 149 FHSG):

May it not be that place is not something that exists in its own right but is spoken according to the arrangement and position of bodies, with reference to their natures and capacities? And similarly in the case of animals and plants and in general all things with a differentiated structure, whether living or not, provided that their nature involves a shape. [. . .] And for this reason each thing is said to be in its own space by virtue of its having its proper ordering.

(Simpl. in *Phys.* 639.12–20, partial quotation)

When Simplicius (ca. 480–540 CE) took up this discussion in his commentary on the *Physics* in the early sixth century CE, he clearly read Theophrastus' *Physics* alongside Aristotle's (604,5–6 Diels: 'Theophrastus in his *Physics* presents puzzles . . .'). From this he developed a view which clearly goes beyond the Theophrastean comments.²⁶ His exploratory queries are converted into the suggestion—articulated in more positive terms—that we should move away from the idea of a place having a power, but rather should think about things as organisms, where the *arrangement* or ordering (*taxis*) is responsible for the place of the whole and its parts. To understand this reading of Aristotle and Theophrastus we need to remain aware that thinkers like Simplicius espoused a type of Platonism that had undergone many changes and absorbed many influences. In other words, Platonism had become an amalgam of doctrines taken from Plato, Aristotle, Stoicism, and Pythagoreanism. This is why in the late eighteenth century it received the (inaccurate) label 'Neo-platonism'. Studies of the intellectual context can make us aware of such influences so that we may still use Simplicius as a source. In fact, we know that—with some qualifications—his quotations are among the more reliable in ancient authors (which does not mean we should trust his motives for selection or how much he quotes).²⁷ Theophrastus' typical questioning style could simply reflect his approach in teaching, but because he uses this *aporetic* method consistently, it seems a deliberate aspect of his approach to Aristotle. The great scholar Otto Regenbogen already suggested that Theophrastus reflected a particular philosophical stance which expressed a 'certain resignation at the overwhelming amount of data the world offered and the limits of our understanding' (cf. n. 18).

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Theophrastus' contemporary, Eudemus of Rhodes (ca. 370–300 BCE), followed Aristotle closely in the main topics of his *Physics*. The surviving fragments show that his *Physics* probably had five books (fr. 98, fr. 109 W.), skipping Aristotle's book 7, shortening treatment of some topics by way of paraphrase (fr. 35 W. = fr. 55 Stork; fr. 113 W. = fr. 125 Stork). Remarkably, as Simplicius tells us (*Commentary on Physics* 639.13–22 = fr. 149 W. = fr. Stork),

this way of reworking Aristotle did not lead to loss of clarity. Simplicius, who used Eudemos' *Physics* and quotes or refers to him over 100 times, has a high opinion of him, as is clear from his *Commentary on Physics* 68.32–3 (not in Wehrli): 'regarding [our information on] Hippocrates of Chios one does better to permit to Eudemos that he knows, given that he is closer in time and a pupil of Aristotle'.

Eudemos was clearly involved in a close reading of the text. But he, too, is still very much into clarifying and extending rather than becoming fully independent: his work is reactive before it is critical.²⁸ Simplicius does report a more overt questioning of Aristotle's views, even using Eudemos' *Physics* to support a variant reading in the manuscripts (*Commentary on Physics* 522,24–6). Clearly a 'first-generation' Peripatetic had great authority when such problems arose. Simplicius speaks highly of Eudemos, calling him 'lover of truth' several times (e.g. 1024,6) and crediting him with precision, succinctness, and clarity in his treatment of Aristotle's *Physics* (*Commentary on Physics* 48,26–7). The view that the works could be best understood *after* having been taught by the master was long-established: already Plutarch (first century AD) and Aulus Gellius (second century AD) report that this was Aristotle's own belief (Plut. *Life of Sulla* 26; Gellius *Attic Nights* XX.5).²⁹

Strato of Lampsacus (third head of the school, 287–269 BCE) wrote considerably less, and had a keen interest in physics (ca. 60 fragments, compare this with four for logic, 27 for psychology and zoology, five for ethics and politics, and perhaps one for medicine³⁰). It is noteworthy how closely ancient authors link Strato to Democritus and Epicurus (fr. 18–21, see below where I quote 18) in his ideas on physics and, as a corollary, his 'atheism'. Most of his writings have been lost: the recent edition of fragments (Sharples 2011) contains 87 numbered texts (some subdivided further). From later evidence we know that Diogenes Laertius' list of his works is incomplete, because several book titles not listed show up in Greek commentators of late antiquity: his *On being* (fr. 24 Sharples, found in Proclus, a Platonist who lived ca. 412–485 CE); and *On Motion* and *On Change* (fr. 40–41 Sharples, found in the Platonist Simplicius, ca. 480–540 CE). What we do have reveals that Strato was making some individual and original contributions to physics.

In physics Strato disagrees with Aristotle and Plato (fr. 20 Sharples). Several sources (Lactantius, Minucius Felix, Plutarch, Maximus of Tyre) present him as declaring that god is redundant because nature itself has the power to facilitate generation, growth, and decay—it is likely that they all echo the same comment found in Cicero (*Acad.* 2.121 = fr. 18 Sharples):

You [Stoics] say that nothing can [come to be] without god; look, here unexpectedly is Strato of Lampsacus, who gives this god a release from a great task . . . He says that he makes no use of work by the gods in constructing the world, and teaches that whatever there is, is all brought by nature, and not in the same way as he who says all these things are composed of rough and smooth and hooked and barbed bodies interspersed with void [i.e., Democritus]. [. . .] whatever is or comes about is brought about or has been brought about by natural weights and movements.

The tone of the passage is sarcastic in places but the information it provides is unambiguous. Strato offered new ideas which constitute a departure from several important positions in Aristotle,³¹ in particular in his views on the fifth substance, the micro-void, and the soul. These three points belong to significant areas in physics, as they concern the element which Aristotle associated with the movement of the universe (i.e., macrocosm), the smallest particles of matter (microcosm), and a central part of the theory of human agency.³² In each case there seems to be a fundamentally different position compared to Aristotle's.

By claiming that the smallest parts of matter are corpuscular and giving empty space a role to play, Strato moved in a different direction (already remarked on by Simplicius, fr. 31 Sharples = fr. 75–77 W.), proposing a new theory of matter consisting of 'particles' and void to account for the difference in weight of objects. This approach was already taken by Democritus who explained the quality 'heavy' by the balance between the weight of atoms and spaces in-between them, as can be seen, for instance, from a report in Theophrastus *De sensu* § 62 (68A135 DK):

[Democritus says that] the position and the arrangement of empty spaces differ for the hard and soft and heavy and light. Which is why iron is harder, but *lead is heavier*: iron is arranged unevenly and has empty space spread all over and across wide areas, but is compacted in some areas, but generally speaking has more empty space. *Lead*, on the other hand, *having less empty space and evenly [divided], is arranged evenly overall; therefore it is heavier and softer than iron.*

(trans. and emphasis mine)

Aristotle had aimed to refute this notion, arguing that a void was discrete from matter, not *part of it* (*Phys.* 213b32–214a17). It is possible that teacher and student used the designation 'empty space' (*to kenon*, 'void') in different senses, but the fact remains that Strato did not simply adopt Aristotle's position on matter.

With this corpuscularian theory Strato tried to solve another problem in Aristotle's theory of place (Algra 1995). He had observed that falling objects accelerate (fr. 40 Sharples = fr. 73 W.). Strato did not accept the tendency of upward movement by the elements (as did Aristotle, *Physics* 4.5), but rather a downward motion which could result in a dislocation of lighter elements by heavier elements, causing these to be pushed up and replaced, a process he calls

‘(circular) replacement’ (*antiperistasis*). The basic qualities of matter, so instrumental in the cycle of the four elements, are merely acting on account of their quantity, it seems (fr. 48 Sharples = fr. 49 W.), with hot and cold as basic constituents of nature, described as ‘bodily powers’ (fr. 30AB Sharples = fr. 65a,b W.; Gatzemeier 1970: 122). The term for ‘powers’ (*dunameis*) is significant here, because Simplicius explains that, in line with Peripatetic assumptions, they are incorporeal and hence can reach places that rays considered to be corporeal cannot.

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(d) Time

Aristotle’s views on time are mostly focused on the definition of time and its parts, and how part and whole relate to each other.

Strato discussed matters of time (eternity) as part of his wider interests in physics and metaphysics (esp. fr. 24 and 31). In the list of Strato’s works, the titles show a variety of interests (11 in DL 5. 59; one in Proclus; one in Simplicius) including treatises *On the gods*, *On Principles*, *On the Void*, and *On the Heaven*. In dialectic we see him add a topos related to lack and falling short (fr. 16 *Topika*). Alexander criticized him: ‘wanting to make an innovation (*kainotomêsai*) in a small matter, [Strato] destroys something more important’. (fr. 16 Sharples; see also [Chapter 3](#), p. 12).

Strato did not agree with Aristotle that time was the ‘number of change’. Simplicius explicitly attributes to him a different direction on this point (‘new path’, *kainoteran hodon* fr. 31 = *Comm. on Phys.* 789, 1–2).³³ On metaphysical questions Strato also expressed some distinctive views which look at the ultimate cause of the universe, and perhaps belong to theology (fr. 18–24, 37 Sharples). Cicero (*Acad.* 2.121 = fr. 18) reports of him as giving god no role in the creation. (Cicero disagrees at the end of the fragment, while wondering whether Strato meant that Nature = God). A century later Seneca claims that Strato thought that god had no body (fr. 22). These claims could easily be interpreted as atheist, so it is no surprise that the Churchfather Lactantius (ca. 250–ca. 325 CE) dismissed him as one of the Greeks who made unworthy substances gods, Strato supposedly saying that heaven and earth *are* gods (also fr. 22). Given the polemical context this testimonium may be not be fully reliable, but one can see how the chain of reporting from Cicero to Lactantius leads to an increasingly hostile reading of Strato’s views on the role of god(s) in his very mechanical universe. Still, his view features in a longer discussion of the important question about the beginning and end of the universe (as is clear from the final part of the fragment).

There is, finally, some evidence that Strato did take on the subject of ontology at a more general level, that is, talked metaphysics proper. The late Platonist Proclus (ca. 435–470) offers a Neoplatonic interpretation of god’s activity and criticises Strato for claiming that ‘Being is the cause of continuing’ (fr. 24). Proclus argues that ‘he should have said that eternity is the cause of being for all things’, giving us also the title of the book he presumably based his comments on: *On being*. Intriguingly this title is not mentioned in the list of DL. Later still we find some brief discussions of his views on space/void and time (fr. 25AB, 37). The Platonist Damascius (ca. 460–ca. 520 CE) declared that Strato’s notion of being as subsistence was wrongly assuming an etymological link between ‘being’ and ‘rest’ (*De princ.* II 76.18–21 Westerink–Combès = fr. 25B Sharples). The argument turns on the presumed link between ‘being’ (*hē ousia*) and ‘what remains’ (*to menon*), a link which Damascius wants to deny: ‘rest’ may perhaps accompany ‘being’, but the two are not identical. The source for his discussion, one would suspect, was Strato’s *On being* (fr. 24, Proclus) or *On principles* (fr. 1.15 = DL 5. 59). And fr. 24 makes it likely that Damascius used Proclus’ comments as a starting point. Thus early sixth century CE philosophers still looked back to the third century BCE (relying on an intermediary from the fifth century CE) to refute a hostile argument in defence of Plato. Clearly Strato’s arguments were considered a threat and therefore given serious consideration. A full understanding of these late reports escapes us due to textual and interpretative difficulties, an important obstacle being that they provide the only version of Strato’s argument.

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(e) *Prime mover*

Aristotle considers the prime mover to be the first and ultimate cause of the universe. Because the prime mover is pure actuality, and this attractive state makes everything in the world strive to be like it, the prime mover is not acting on the world, but stimulating everything to emulate it. As we saw above, Theophrastus gave first principles some serious thought, while Strato rejected the idea of a god as redundant (see also [Chapter 3](#), on metaphysical problems). Theophrastus’ metaphysical tract *On first principles* ends with some considerations of the prime mover, but his caution about its nature and status leaves the reader somewhat nonplussed about his views. We can infer, though, that some criticism is involved in his metaphysical considerations with regard to the prime mover. He starts out by canvassing the scope of the field and by asking about the primacy of principles and their number:

1.1 How and by what sort of characteristics should one delimit the study of the first things?
For the study of nature is more diverse and (according to some people at least) less orderly,

involving all kinds of change; that of the first things, on the other hand, is definite and always the same. [. . .] 1.4 but if some other entity is prior to and more powerful than these, of this we should try to say whether it is one thing in number, or in species, or in genus. It is at any rate more reasonable that, having the nature of a principle, they consist in few things and things out of the ordinary—that is, if not actually in first things and in the very first of all.³⁴

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This careful approach is typical of Theophrastus. The succinctness of the writing and the sketchy reference to ‘some people’ indicate that his focus is on the subject matter, not the received views (*endoxa*), although he does mention Plato, Xenocrates, and a few others later (6b5–10; Heraclitus 7a15 etc.).

Much of his discussion is about raising problems (*aporésai*) and exploring possible pathways in order to find out more about the prime mover. After arguing that the unified view of the prime mover is more convincing than a divided conception, he asks further questions about how things can aspire to be like the prime mover:

II.3 If the tendency . . . involves soul—unless one were speaking by simile or metaphor—the bodies moving [in virtue of this tendency] would be endowed by soul. Soul seems to be coexistent with movement (for it is life to those who have it), in which indeed the desires towards each object originate, as in the case of animals, . . . If then the first [cause] is the cause of circular motion, it cannot be the cause of the *best* motion; for the movement of the soul is more powerful, and obviously first and most of all that of the thinking faculty, in which indeed the desire originates.³⁵

Theophrastus’ questions show an informed mind puzzling over important issues. The perspective seems suitable for a didactic treatment, and includes potential criticism of Aristotle, which remains implicit, because polemic is not the intended purpose. The step-by-step analysis of the links between movement, soul, and prime mover demonstrates how he ‘unpacks’ the Aristotelian argument. Reale has pointed out that Theophrastus closely follows *Metaphysics* book 12 in many respects. But beyond such links it is much more difficult to establish convincing parallels between this short work and Aristotle’s treatise on *First Philosophy* in particular regarding any clear connections between theology and a science of being *qua* being.

In short, the prime mover does not seem to have enjoyed wide support in the school, and scholars have speculated that the analysis of Theophrastus may well have stymied further study in metaphysics.

Perception and soul: Aristotelian psychology

To the extent that Aristotle considers the soul a principle of natural living things, it is part of his physics, since it is characterised by motion, the key concept for all natural processes. Plato had already determined the special nature of souls as self-movers (*Phd.* 245c–e). Aristotle’s account of the soul and its capacities constitutes a major shift in that he considers the soul as the *form* (*eidos*) of living beings (which are thus a compound of body and soul, in which they are inextricably interlinked). The senses become the delivery systems of specific data: sight discerns colours, hearing the sounds, smell the odours, and so on (*De sensu* 3, 439a6–9; *Metaph.* 1010b20–26). For this reason he has to come up with a further mechanism that can synthesise these into a coherent sense datum. This he calls the ‘common sense’ (‘common’ because it shares in all specific sense data), which is also responsible for awareness.

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Theophrastus and Strato carefully examined his theory. Both respond to and extend the discussion of Aristotle in their respective works *On Motion* and continue to treat the activities of the soul (*energeias*) as motions (*kinêseis*). It is significant that Simplicius provides us with information about both within one context (*Comm. on Phys.* 965,1–21), ending his discussion with an argument from authority: ‘from this it is obvious that the soul moves according to *the best of the Peripatetics* . . .’. These divergences from Aristotle again evoke the question how we are to understand a Peripatetic’s allegiance, but as already noted, the question of orthodoxy is not pertinent at this stage of the school’s development, so we should not assume that disagreement on a few points would be an immediate threat to a follower’s commitment or to the unity of the school. It depends on how much disagreement one can tolerate before the ‘school’ loses its character as a unified front. But apparently Peripatetics who criticise (some of) the founder’s ideas still are Peripatetics.³⁶

We can reconstruct significant aspects of Theophrastus’ epistemology and psychology (fr. 265–327 FHSG) on the basis of mostly late sources, some going back to his own *On the soul*. (I will deal with psychology here, but with epistemology in [Chapter 3](#)). His empiricist approach shines through in several statements, advocating that perception is crucial for knowledge (fr. 301B, 143 FHSG), and that self-evidence is a criterion of truth (*enargeia*, fr. 301A). As one of the few among the early successors studying and commenting on Aristotle’s *On the soul*, he asks valid questions about the process of sensation (Q: how does the sense organ become *like* the object? A: The organ receives a universal form).

Theophrastus appears to have attempted to clarify the account of intellect (extant in later sources as paraphrases) and in the process hinted at some less satisfactory aspects of Aristotle’s account. His concerns over the notoriously

difficult account of *nous* (Arist. *On the soul* 3.5) are paraphrased in Themistius (fr. 307A) and the Neoplatonist Priscian (fr. 307B–D). He asks after its nature in relation to matter: because both seem ‘nothing, but potentially all things’, they need to be featureless in order to absorb the nature of things perceived. He also puzzles over the manner in which thinker and thought might affect each other. Theophrastus certainly did not reject the theory of form, but he did not seem very interested in the relation between form and the form-matter compound, probably because he did not consider this matter problematic.³⁷ One could ask whether puzzling over such details implies that he had a major disagreement with Aristotle or were these merely attempts to clarify connections and ‘loose ends’ not previously articulated sufficiently by the school’s founder? The better question to ask is perhaps: is Theophrastus asking genuine questions or entertaining different ways of interpretation for didactic reasons? We should resist too much speculation and consider this point from a pragmatic perspective. Aristotle’s grand scheme did lack detail in a number of ways, so that filling out these blanks was a useful exercise in attaining consistency and comprehensiveness. As we will see in this and the next two chapters, much remained to be done on an already imposing body of work.

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Aristotle’s account of the soul and its capacities constituted a major shift of focus and method in that he identified individual senses with specific objects (sight-colours, smell-odours, etc.) and a common sense which would recognise ‘shared’ features (e.g. size and shape). Theophrastus and Strato questioned the soundness of his theory: we see the former ask whether the intellect was really inherent or from outside (fr. 307A FHSG), and the latter eliminate the distinction between sensory and soul motion, aiming for a more unified soul (fr. 41 Sharples = fr. 74 W.).³⁸

Sense perception was a topic of particular interest among the successors of Aristotle. We find works on vision among the surviving titles for Theophrastus and Strato, and a possible account of a ‘corpuscular’ theory in Hieronymus (fr. 10 White), although in the latter case it is unclear whether he is merely reporting a theory or actually subscribes to it. Given that Strato did propose a corpuscular theory, it is not impossible that Hieronymus continued to uphold such a position.

Theophrastus followed many of the main doctrines closely, as Simplicius tends to emphasise (‘[he] followed Aristotle in almost everything’, *Comm. On Phys.* 789, 1–5 = Theophr. fr. 151B = Strato fr. 31). But spread across his works we can also find deviations (not presented as such) that show him a keen observer of natural phenomena and creative in adjusting and reformulating certain aspects of his mentor’s ideas. The empiricist foundation of his thought

allows him on occasion to make an interesting addition to the account of sense perception and physiology: one such example is the novel terminology he coins to describe the specific matter which transmits certain signals in hearing and smelling (resp. *diêches* ‘transsonant’ and *diosmon* ‘trans-odorous’, fr. 277C FHSG).

As we saw, Strato chose a different basis for his physical theory. A few comments may make his unusual positions clear (we will revisit his departure from Aristotelian physics in [Chapter 5](#)). Despite his elaborate studies in nature, Strato also wrote on sensation, pleasure, colours, diseases, inspiration, and dialectic (DL 5. 59–60). Interestingly, his alternative physics did not seem to affect his general views on the soul very much. His theory of soul comes across as physicalist. We also know from a trail of later references to Strato in both the Peripatetic and Platonic traditions that he undertook an elaborate critique of Plato’s arguments for the immortality of the soul as expounded in the *Phaedo*. Although the interpretation of the late sources is complex—we are again dealing with Platonic commentators with their own agenda and keen to refute Strato—there are still sufficient reasons to infer that Strato’s critique had become part of the discussions on the soul’s immortality.³⁹ Strato pinpointed some inconsistencies in Plato’s reasoning, specifically by attacking the logical coherence of the argument for the immortality of the soul, and raising some ingenious problems regarding Plato’s claims.⁴⁰ Thus Plato’s argument on recollection (the idea that our soul ‘remembers’ things from a previous existence) is countered by the criticism that this should mean we should have certain skills without the need for practising, for example in playing the flute (fr. 77A Sharples).

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We may also approach the problem from Strato’s end. Deborah Modrak’s interpretation of Strato’s psychology offers a further argument in support of the suggestion that these objections in Strato can be understood as part of his broader thought on the soul.⁴¹ Modrak also favours a serious motivation on the part of Damascius (our main source for this material), who aimed to show that Strato’s objections undermine the dualism in Plato. I would add that, conversely, Strato may use these objections to defend his physicalist theory of cognitive activity. This, Modrak suggests, is what motivates him ‘to establish the severity of the problems internal to the rival Platonic theory of mind’.⁴²

Because Strato’s physicalism is not explicit from the remaining fragments, uncovering it requires some effort, but Modrak offers a persuasive argument for a physicalist reading. The clues have a cumulative force and they can be construed in a way that makes them consistent with Aristotle’s attempt to ‘steer a course between the opposing camps’ of dualism on the one hand, and

reductive materialism of the atomists on the other.⁴³ Her argument revolves around the idea that Strato is trying to offer a simpler version of Aristotle's hylomorphism. Strato succeeds, she claims, by offering a version of physicalism more subtle than the atomists (*ibid.* p. 384). She then identifies three components of this characterisation. Firstly, Strato believes that the physical nature of the mind and body allows them to interact; secondly, he believes that there is a unity to the intellect and the senses (fr. 61)—supposedly a conclusion that may be reached by viewing the intellect as an embodied capacity, and not a separate entity (which would lead to dualism); and thirdly, he says that the soul is changed during cognition (fr. 41). By contrast, there is no evidence that Strato has anything to say which can be construed as a dualist conception of the soul. In sum, what we have here is a plausible reconstruction of his physicalist psychology—the positive pole to his own doctrine of the soul.⁴⁴

A rather interesting piece of evidence from the Aristotelian tradition strongly suggests that its adherents also took problems and objections about the soul seriously, as we can see for instance from a passage in a late commentator, discussing adjectives that go best with the soul to describe its immortal nature:

[Aristotle] rightly added 'eternal' (*aidion*) as Plato in the *Phaedo* (106a–e) added 'indestructible', so that we should not, like Boethius, think that the soul, like the being-ensouled (*empsukhta*) is indeed undying (*athanaton*), in that it does not itself endure death when that approaches, but withdraws when [death] comes upon the living creature and so perishes.

(pseudo-Simplicius, *Commentary on De anima* 247.23–6)

Strato also rejected the notion of an external prime mover as cause of the universe (fr. 18 Sharples = fr. 32 W.), opting for a more mechanistic model which appeals to fortune (*tuchē*), and a notion of nature which is independent yet not completely mechanistic.⁴⁵ Getting rid of a divine cause of the universe was as much a departure from Aristotle as it was a criticism of the Stoics, who postulated an all-pervasive divine force in the universe (*logos*, Zeus). It seems that Strato tried to reduce differentiation in viewing change as possessing continuity, according to Simplicius, who infers that Strato perhaps aimed for one unified concept of motion (fr. 38B Sharples = fr. 71 W.).

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Finally, we find him criticising Aristotle regarding his definition of time, protesting that it is not a *measure* of change, although he hardly differs from him in his considered view of time overall (fr. 75–6 W.). All these points illustrate how Strato in his discussions of Aristotle's views in physics takes a very different direction in physics, the area that seems to have had his special interest. Unlike others, he even discussed zoology in the broader context of

physiology (Wehrli 1969, 103). Since ancient sources continue to classify him as a member of the school (DL 5. 58), we can be reassured that there was a considerable tolerance towards internal dissent.

Other extant reports about the soul in the Peripatos refer to Dicaearchus as the author of a work *On the soul* in two books (fr. 11B Mirhady = Cicero, *Tō Atticus* 13.32.2). This and several other reports present a set of views which signal another deviation from Aristotelian doctrine, although in some cases the presentation of the position attempts to make it look as a *development* of Aristotle's own views. Cicero, who asked Atticus to send him the work (letter cited above), no doubt read it in the original Greek. Elsewhere he comments that he prefers to ignore Dicaearchus because 'he appears never to have felt grief, since he was not aware that he had a soul' (fr. 15 Mirhady = *Tusc. Disp.* 1. 41). Cicero's argument may seem rather strange and dismissive, but once we recall that he was writing the *Tusculan Discussions* after his daughter had died, we understand that grief was very much on his mind, while composing this work (book 3 has a long discussion of grief and other emotions). According to Cicero a soul is instrumental for feeling emotions, and life experience will confirm that having experienced grief means one has a soul. If one is not aware of one's soul (Cicero uses the verb *sentire*, which retains a hint of sense experience), one cannot have experienced serious emotions such as grief.

The denial of the soul's existence by Dicaearchus is confirmed in other passages (*Tusc. Disp.* 1. 15, *Acad.* 2. 124, Sextus Emp. *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 2. 31, Atticus the Platonist, fr. 7. 9–10; these are frs. 15–18 Mirhady resp.). But while the first three simply acknowledge that Dicaearchus denied there being a (substantial) soul, the Platonist Atticus (ca. 175 CE) presents an argument which sees Dicaearchus as continuing Aristotle's lead:

For it is not the soul, says (Aristotle), but the man that actualises each of these (mental processes), and the soul is in this way unmoved. Dicaearchus *followed accordingly* and since he was competent at observing what was entailed (sc. in Aristotle's view), he took away the entire existence of the soul.⁴⁶

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Atticus' version is perhaps a more unitarian reading of Dicaearchus' position. He suggests that Dicaearchus saw 'what was entailed' (*akolouthon*) from Aristotle's position and followed this intuition through to its logical conclusion: if 'man' brings about mental processes, and soul remains unmoved, one can do away with the soul. That he also dubbed the soul a 'harmony' (fr. 21B Mirhady = Nemesius, *On Human Nature* 2) may perhaps be closer to his actual view, since the same source also informs us that 'Aristotle and Dicaearchus say that [the soul] is non-substantial'. Perhaps this is what Atticus had in mind when he said that Dicaearchus abolished the 'entire existence of the soul' (*tên holên*

hypostasin)? Since we know that his work was a strongly anti-Peripatetic polemic against Aristotle, he may just have seized the opportunity to blacken Dicaearchus along with Aristotle.⁴⁷ (I shall return to Dicaearchus' divergence from Aristotle in [Chapter 5](#).)



The significant gap in our knowledge of the history of the school between Lyco (ca. 280 BCE) and Critolaus (156 BCE) is at present insurmountable: evidence is simply absent. For Lyco, appointed by Strato as his successor in his will, we have very little information on his physical theory, possibly, as scholars have speculated, because the focus of research moved to ethics, politics, and literature. The same holds for subsequent heads and members of the school (Phainias, Hieronymus, Aristo, Critolaos). But a few details survive. Hieronymus' theory of vision is preserved in Plutarch, *Table Talk* 1.8, 626A–B (fr. 10 White), even if the text is slightly damaged. The theory seems to align with contemporary views, claiming that 'we see by means of the bodies coming from visible objects' and presumes the presence of pores, when the passage states that old people close to the source of these bodies are disturbed by their density 'when they first depart', because in old people 'eyesight contains slow-working pores (*braduporos*) and lacks elasticity'.⁴⁸ This kind of theoretical position seems to be close to that of Strato.

In the first century BCE we find several individuals who were regarded as Peripatetics. Some of them expressed strong disagreement with Aristotle: in particular Boethus of Sidon who receives admiring comments from the commentator Simplicius for his 'deep thought' (*Comm. on Cat.* 1.18) and Xenarchus of Seleucia (Strabo 14.5.4; cf. Julian *Orations* V. 162, *Simpl. Comm. on On the Heaven* 1). Boethus criticizes Aristotle's fifth element and, like Theophrastus, denies the existence of *aether*.⁴⁹

We know that Andronicus, Boethus, and Xenarchus engaged with the Aristotelian corpus in the second half of the first century BCE. Andronicus had a hand in organising the works, and both he and Boethus discussed the important question of where one should start in studying Aristotle's philosophy. Andronicus seems to have favoured the *Categories* as the most appropriate work to start, while Boethus recommended the *Physics*.⁵⁰ We shall return to Andronicus in [Chapter 3](#).

Xenarchus is a slightly different case. He should be viewed as a Peripatetic in a specific sense: his criticisms of Aristotle make him neither a full-blown enemy nor a committed follower. He is more an interested party studying

Aristotle's ideas and giving his views on them.⁵¹ His most significant critique focuses on rejecting *aither* as the fifth element (*quintessentia* in the middle ages) which Aristotle allocated to the heavens. This point had already been raised by Theophrastus and Strato, and we will hear about the details of the argument in [Chapter 6](#).

A few words must be said on topics in physics which were not fully explored by Aristotle, but became developed by his successors. In botany Theophrastus undertook a systematic study of all plants (*Investigations into Plants* in nine books) and explanations for their intrinsic nature and functions (*Causes of Plants* in six books). In these studies he gives an elaborate and detailed account of the parts and types of plants, working with one particular 'archetype' (*paradeigma*) as a model (the tree) in order to start from what seems most 'perfect' and best known.⁵² This approach mirrored Aristotle's animal studies, in which one specimen served as the structuring device (example function) to build up the whole classification of types measured against that core notion.

Spurious works

As so often in the case of famous authors in antiquity (Hippocrates is a well-known example), some writings attributed to Aristotle were not authentic. This could happen for several different reasons. In some cases these were deliberate forgeries made for personal gain. In other cases, misattributions would lead uninformed readers to believe the work was by a certain author, while it was probably the work of a student or follower.

In the past 100 years or so scholars have declared some works spurious (not genuinely by Aristotle). But it is of some interest to consider why they were added to the corpus and how scholars have decided on the question who the real author might be. The works I will consider here are all studies of natural phenomena and presented with a narrow focus and method. Two are of particular interest for our purpose: *On Colours* (*peri chrōmatōn* or *De coloribus*) and *On Things Heard* (*peri akoustōn* or *De audibilibus*). In the 1960s Gottschalk did important work offering new and detailed analyses of these short works, proposing a possible author for both. Regarding *On Colours*, Gottschalk has persuasively argued that the work may in fact be by Theophrastus or a close contemporary (but not Strato; Gottschalk 1964), because its un-Aristotelian features turn out to be logical, but one-sided, developments of elements already present in Aristotle's work. The second case is *On Things Heard* (*peri akoustōn*) which proved more difficult. Here analysis by careful elimination of candidates leads Gottschalk to propose Strato as the possible author (Gottschalk 1968). Both works, then, illustrate how 'deviation' from the master may arise from evolving details in his theories. It is easier to understand this if we regard this expansion as a slow process, by which the widening gap between founder

and followers may happen naturally, or in some cases even unintentionally. In neither case it seems to have raised the issue of loyalty.

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A work which we cannot consider here, but is worth mentioning, is the collection of questions and ‘problems’ produced around the time of Theophrastus and Strato. This work, which goes under the title *Problēmata Physika*, contains a rather curious series of questions about a wide range of topics, from mother’s milk to the smell of urine, from colour blindness to rainbows. Recently, scholars have reconsidered the content and links to Aristotle’s doctrine.⁵³ The *Problems* clearly contain derivative materials that start out from Aristotelian ideas.⁵⁴ They are possibly part of the school’s practice of debating issues in an educational environment, but lack a coherent plan or continuous argument. All these works contain Aristotelian doctrines, but they also include ideas that are not Aristotle’s. Given that ancient critics did not yet have elaborate methods to establish authenticity beyond any doubt, one can understand how these works ended up in the Aristotelian corpus.

Conclusion

The discussion of the debate on Aristotle’s *Physics* and *Metaphysics* in the Peripatos shows there was a lively and ongoing engagement with these important subjects, but it is less clear how much they read Aristotle’s metaphysical work (probably still only in the form of individual essays rather than the single treatise we have now). To a large extent it involved followers within the school attempting to make the Aristotelian edifice more complete and consistent. Importantly, these improvements and additions were part of the debate *internal* to the school. Pressures external to the school also triggered several responses (more on this aspect in [Chapter 6](#)). As has become clear in the case of these two areas, they were already traditional in that they continued the long-standing investigations into nature, as begun by the Presocratics, and the explorations into metaphysical causes, as initiated by Parmenides and developed by Plato. But Aristotle clearly brought many original ideas to the debate, and made a much clearer effort to distinguish himself from his predecessors by systematic criticism of their views. The meaning of ‘nature’ (*phusis*) became redefined, and gave rise to a well-circumscribed field of research in which motion, place, time, and weight received quite detailed explanations. His choice of causes was also better justified and allowed him to introduce the notions of actuality and potentiality, cause, substance, and form.

His followers took up the challenge of continuing his work, but this did not mean that they always agreed or merely added to the corpus. Theophrastus

expanded the study of nature by adding works on the non-living phenomena (*ta apsyncha*) and developing botany in parallel to Aristotle's animal studies.⁵⁵ His focus in metaphysics was on foundations (*On First Principles*) and the questions he asked were sensible and no doubt a stimulus for his students to consider the subject afresh. Clearly they evaluated and corrected their founder, and even re-directed their attention to some new areas of enquiry. The extant evidence only gives us a limited (and distorted) vision of the resulting intellectual legacy, but there can be no doubt that the ideas of Aristotle remained in circulation, most likely his exoteric writings but possibly also a number of written copies of his esoteric writings, so that it is not impossible that his ideas were discussed inside and outside the school.

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Notes

- 1 See Gotthelf and Lennox 1987 on his philosophy of biology.
- 2 A small discrepancy may be found in *Metaph.* 5 which speaks of six causes.
- 3 On Presocratic legacies and Plato's influence, see Solmsen 1960, chs. 1–2.
- 4 Sharples 1985, id. 2002. See also [Chapter 5](#).
- 5 For the fragments see fr. 225–45 FHSG with Baltussen forthcoming; the text for *De sensu* is in Diels *Doxographi* 1879, 499–529, and in Stratton 1917 with English translation. A new text with translation and commentary is being prepared by Katerina Ierodiakonou (University of Athens). See also Baltussen forthcoming.
- 6 Praxiphanes (often referred to as 'the student of Theophrastus') apparently also commented critically on the *Timaeus*, as Proclus (412–85 BCE) mentions him in the early section of his *Commentary on Plato's Tim.* 17A (fr. 23A MM and M). Proclus (fr. 23B) adds that Porphyry responded to him 'word-for-word' (*kata podas*).
- 7 For more specialised reading on Theophrastus' role in the transmission of philosophical views (labelled 'doxography' in the nineteenth century by the German scholar Hermann Diels) see Mansfeld 1989, Mansfeld and Runia 1997, 2009, and Baltussen 1992.
- 8 It would take far too long to list his achievements here. As to his work in medicine, little survives, but we know that he wrote works related to medical issues and dissections (*Iatrika* and *Anatomōn*, DL 5. 25) and that he maintained that a philosopher should also know about medicine, and a physician about philosophy (*De sensu* 436a19–22; *De respir.* 480b26–30). See Van der Eijk 2005.
- 9 The full list in DL 5. 22–27 contains ca. 157 titles, and DL tells us at 5. 27 that they contained ca. 445,270 lines all in. On the corpus of Aristotle and the lists preserving titles see Düring 1957, Moraux 1973, Barnes 1997, and Hatzimichaeli 2013.
- 10 It is worth pointing out that I have here translated the Greek preposition *pros* in the sense of 'response to', but it could just as well have a stronger sense of 'against' so that it reflects a polemical work. The first is potentially neutral in judgment, the second critical. See also [Chapter 6](#), pp. 130–1.
- 11 In *Physics* 7 Aristotle discusses three kinds of motion (243a36 ff.), namely that which causes locomotion, that which causes alterations, and that which causes increase or decrease.

- 12 The term 'leader', *koruphaios* (Simplicius *Comm. on Phys.* 964,30) is also a term for party leaders in politics (Polybius 28.4.6); in drama for the leader of the chorus (cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1277a11 in his account of excellence of the good citizen). So far as we know Theophrastus was *not* given the label *gnēsidiōtatos*: 'most genuine, most sincere', which is reserved for Xenocrates' relation to Plato (*Comm. on On the Heaven* 12,22; *Comm. on Phys.* 1165,24), Aristotle to Plato (ibid. 378,21), and for Alexander's status as commentator on Aristotle (Simpl. *Comm. on Phys.* 258,16).
 - 13 'best', *ariston* (Simpl. *Comm. on Cat.* 435,26); 'companions', *hetairoi* (id. *Comm. on Phys.* 788,35).
 - 14 We are fortunate to have a considerable amount of material from Theophrastus' writings, although much of it is fragmentary, preserved in quotations and paraphrases in later authors. But there are also some smaller works which have survived in a continuous manuscript tradition (Burnikel 1974). The standard fragment edition is that of Fortenbaugh, Huby, Sharples, and Gutas [= FHSG 1992, 2 vols].
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- 15 Mejer 1998, 5.
 - 16 Steinmetz 1964, 172.
 - 17 Longrigg 1966, 177; cf. Regenbogen 1940, 1549.22–57.
 - 18 I rely here on my observations in Baltussen 2000, ch. 2.3. For the textual evidence on the importance of *aisthēsis* in Theophrastus' system see ibid. ch. 3.1.
 - 19 Regenbogen (1940), col. 1393.49 ff.; it was foreshadowed in Aristotle, e.g. *PA* 640a1–2, *EN* 1094b13–14, 1098a20 ff., *Top.* 162b8 (*kata tēn oikeion methodon*). Compare the recent suggestion by Huby (1985: 321) based on the study of a few large fragments: 'we may conclude that Theophrastus wrote works intended to clear up puzzles by means of a detailed examination of cases, often giving different explanations for different cases. It is at least a working-hypothesis that other works were of the same kind'.
 - 20 This section is partly based on Baltussen 2006 (§4).
 - 21 Another aspect of physics is weight, a topic already touched on by the atomists. So far as we know Theophrastus did not have an elaborate view on weight, but it is possible that it does not survive. Some scraps of information in various places of his works give us hints as to what he may have thought about this aspect of natural objects. For instance, he discussed the weight of water (Steinmetz, 1964: 263 ff.). Strato, on the other hand, did react to Aristotle's notion of weight in his own original way. In *On the heaven* (*De caelo* 4.4 311b16–29) Aristotle had set out his main position. See fr. 49, 50B Sharples discussed by Lefebvre in Desclos and Fortenbaugh 2012.
 - 22 Sharples 2008: 67.
 - 23 Sorabji 1988 and 1992, Algra 1995, 234–48; for the period 200 BCE–200 BCE see Sorabji and Sharples 2007, Sharples 2010a. For older studies see Solmsen 1960 (ch. 6 and 12), Moraux 1985.
 - 24 Sorabji 1992, 56.
 - 25 Sorabji 1988, 186.
 - 26 On this approach see Sorabji 1992.
 - 27 See especially Sorabji 1988, 1992; Baltussen 2002, 2008.
 - 28 See Baltussen 2006 for further discussion.
 - 29 For a detailed discussion of the issue see Fazzo 2012, 53–60.

- 30 See Sharples (2011, 14–17) on the question whether references to a physician named Strato can mean the Peripatetic and whether he could have studied with Erasistratus in Alexandria (unlikely).
- 31 Full treatment in Gatzemeier 1970, but should not to be taken at face value.
- 32 On the fifth substance, see Falcon 2012, 21–22 and 177; on micro-void, Sanders 2011: 263–76; and on psychology, see Modrak, 2011: ‘Physicalism in Strato’s Psychology’.
- 33 For Strato’s attempts at novelty compare [Chapter 3](#), p. 64. Critolaus also seems to have declared that time is not ‘real’ but ‘a thought or measure’ (fr. 14 W. = Stob. Ecl. 1. 8, 40b).
- 34 Transl. M. van Raalte 1993, 38 ff.
- 35 Transl. M. van Raalte 1993, 41.
- 36 On the notion of allegiance to a school, see Sedley 1997, and below [Chapter 5](#).
- 37 Sharples 2009, 160.
- 38 According to Gatzemeier (1970, 16 n. 47) Poppelreuter’s account of Strato’s psychology is accepted by most.
- 39 See Baltussen 2015c.
- 40 This section is based on my more detailed analysis in Baltussen 2015.

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- 41 In Desclos and Fortenbaugh 2011, 383–97.
- 42 Modrak 2011, 394.
- 43 Modrak 2011, 383–384.
- 44 This may find further support in the papyrus fragments which seem to preserve material from a work talking about attunement of the soul: Appendix to fr. 81 (Sharples, p. 185) = *CPF* III, 213–14 [= PHeid G inv.28 col. II + PGraecMon 21 fr. A col. I1).
- 45 A full scholarly discussion on mechanistic explanations would not fit the present scope, so I merely note the use of *automaton* in fr. 35 W. (on which see Berryman 2003: 364).
- 46 Fr. 20 Mirhady. The text is preserved in Eusebius, *Preparations for the Gospel* 15.9.10.
- 47 Karamanolis 2006, 29 notes that Atticus wrote a work against those who wanted to acquire knowledge of Plato by way of Aristotle (his n. 87: fr. 1–9 Des Places).
- 48 My translation is more literal than White’s for *braduporos* (‘not very porous’) since that translation strikes me as less clear in expressing characteristics of the eye sight that is of advanced age. For the Peripatetic antecedents of Hieronymus’ theory see Ganson 2004.
- 49 Hankinson 2002–3.
- 50 Testimonies are as follows: Andronicus, see *Simpl. Comm. On Cat.* 21, 21–4; 29, 28–30, 5, cf. 78, 4–20 [= 12F SHARPLES]; for Andronicus and Boethus: *Philop. In Cat.* 5, 15–20 m [MorauX ‘Boethos’, 144n]. Clearly Philoponus makes the comment in the context of discussing the *Categories*, and Andronicus’ view, offering a contrasting position.
- 51 In his recent study Falcon (2012) still wants to consider him as Peripatetic, understood as ‘student of Aristotle’s ideas’.
- 52 Wöhrle 1985, 149f. Steinmetz 1964, 26 (quoted by Wöhrle, 150 n.) already pointed out that the example function of one specimen dominated the descriptive works of Aristotle and Theophrastus as point of reference.
- 53 R. Mayhew (ed. 2015) *The Aristotelian Problemata Physica. Philosophical and Scientific Investigations*.

- 54 Bodnár (2015, 6) has summed it up as follows: ‘the most conspicuous sources and influences are Aristotle himself, Theophrastus (in botany and in physiology), Strato of Lampsacus (in some discussions of problems of natural science), the Hippocratic treatises and Diocles of Carystus (on medicine), and Aristoxenus (in *Pr.* 19, on music)’.
- 55 Wöhrlé 1985.

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Further reading

A readable treatment of Aristotle's physics is Solmsen 1960. A good full treatment of Theophrastus' physics is Steinmetz 1964 [in German]. For Theophrastus' survey and discussion of physical opinions (*physikai doxai*) see Mansfeld 1989, 1990, 1996; Baltussen 1992, 2000; Wiesner 1989. A brief introduction to doxography can be found in Mansfeld 2005 (*Stanford Online Encyclopedia*). For a study of Presocratic fragments in the Peripatetics after Aristotle, see Baltussen 2016 (in press), 'Slim Pickings and Russian Dolls? Presocratic Fragments in Peripatetic Sources after Aristotle'. In *Journal for Juristic Papyrology* (Warsaw), special issue, edited by J. Kwapisz et al. 'Fragments, Holes and Wholes'.

3 Things and words

Language, logic, and reasoning

One of Aristotle's major innovations had been to formalise the analysis of language and reasoning, by establishing assertoric syllogistic (*Prior Analytics* A.4–6), the first *system* of formal logic. This work, he says, is about 'demonstrative understanding' (24a10), which aims at constructing valid arguments and rejecting invalid ones. The main argumentative form was the 'syllogism' (*sullogismos*), a formal argument which in its purest form consisted of a major (universal) premise, a minor (particular) premise, and a necessary conclusion that they entail.¹ The famous example ('All humans are mortal; Socrates is a human: therefore Socrates is mortal') is intuitively valid and easy to understand (but note it is not Aristotle's own). The syllogism in this basic form can be expressed in different forms, in which the use of negation (no, none) and various qualifiers (all, some) produces variations ('No man is a bird', 'Socrates is a man', therefore 'Socrates is no bird' etc.).

So far as we know, it was Aristotle's immediate successors (Theophrastus, Eudemus, Strato, Phaeias) who keenly refined and supplemented some of the figures and schemata of reasoning described in both his *Analytics*, but the interest in (formal) logic seems to have trailed off in the next century. After Phaeias we find little evidence for logical analysis until the first century when the *Categories* was rediscovered and became again the object of intense study. In his descriptive system of argumentation Aristotle was the first to develop a technical language of research, which allowed him to speak *about* the methodology of argument and reasoning (as we might say, a second-order language), thus creating the possibility of a well-founded epistemology—a theory of knowledge, a topic which was 'an obsession of Hellenistic philosophy'.²

Reasoning and the skilful (oral) use of language had been a central part of Greek culture as far back as Homer, when kings, generals, and office bearers

took it upon themselves to speak in assemblies and at special occasions. The evidence for experienced speakers in Homer is strong: Nestor was described as offering ‘words of wisdom sweeter than honey’ (*Iliad* A.248) and his name became synonymous with oratorical skill (the sophist Antiphon was nicknamed ‘Nestor’). Ancient rhetoric and dialectic came into their own as a ‘science’ with the sophists and Plato. The sophists, rather than just display their rhetorical skills, studied the technique of speech-making with a view to *teaching* it. Knowledge and logic would now go hand in hand as part of the study of reasoning (*logikê*). Aristotle wrote occasional ‘essays’ on the former which together can be construed as his ‘epistemology’.³ In logic, he is especially known for his contribution to deductive reasoning (the syllogism) and comments on the acquisition and justification of knowledge. His other major contribution was of course in rhetoric, where his work synthesised and developed the existing knowledge on the techniques and use of public speaking.

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This chapter tries to recapture some of the activities in rhetoric, logic, and epistemology and how logic is linked to metaphysics. I will first give some background to logic and rhetoric, including a selective overview of the surviving information (titles, fragments, reports). After sketching the continuity in these two areas, we will also consider who among the students engaged with Aristotle’s metaphysical ideas.⁴ The focus will be on assessing how much work was done in these areas, whether it was innovative and how significant (or influential) it may have been.

Background

A theoretical approach to reasoning had its origins in rhetoric, in a time when its practitioners lay the foundations for a richly argumentative culture in Greece. Creating a speech is one thing, skilfully composing it in order to enhance its persuasive effect another, and offering a systematic analysis the real challenge. The sophists and Plato cleared the way for analysis of rhetorical skills, and Aristotle, in an attempt to organise these practices, categorised the types and tools of reasoning, so that they would be available in a more manageable form for training purposes. His *Rhetorika* (oratory) and *Topika* (dialectic) record these practices and skills in a way that provides them with foundational principles and order. In fact, Aristotle defined the one by reference to the other: ‘Rhetoric’, states the opening sentence of the work, ‘is the counterpart of dialectic’ (*Rhet.* 1354a1). Aware of early efforts he acknowledged some of his predecessors in the study of rhetoric and dialectic (e.g. *Rhetoric* I.3–4, 12 and *Sophistic Refutations* 34), but he still claimed to make

an original contribution in the manner in which he had brought together the materials, subjected them to a thorough analysis, and reorganised them under new headings (e.g. figures of speech). Dialectic was a method of debate which started in Plato's Academy, and was performed as a training method in argument (two speakers would discuss a thesis, one to support it, the other to refute it—logical consistency was more important than truthfulness). In rhetoric he pointed out that speeches often make use of the enthymeme, a kind of syllogism with an implicit premise (unexpressed for the sake of brevity or to keep the argument informal). For instance, one could say 'all city states want to assist their citizens, and so does Athens', omitting the premise 'Athens is a city state'. He also gave a more elaborate account of the uses of rhetoric (*Rhet.* I.1), showing how this art of persuasion related to political theory and practice. In other words, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* represented a new stage in the understanding of language as a powerful vehicle for political and philosophical ideas, an advanced technique of persuasion. Here of course success was more important than truth.

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Aristotle's work in 'logic' created ongoing debate inside and outside the Peripatos. His discussion of basic concepts in the *Categories*, such as substance (*ousia*), quality, and quantity, raised further questions as to whether this was an exhaustive and comprehensive way to 'slice up' the world or a first draft of concepts, and, more pressingly, whether the 'categories' identified in the work were referring to things or words. As we will see, the work drew special attention in the first century BCE, first because it became regarded as introductory and requiring exegesis, and secondly, as the starting point of a curriculum, when Andronicus tried to arrange the works into a suitable 'programme' of reading the known corpus.⁵ An exciting new find in 2005 of a text in the famous Archimedes palimpsest revealed some 14 pages of an anonymous commentary on the *Categories* (see n. 43 and text). Once the attempts at interpreting them had started, Stoics, Platonists, and Peripatetics all busied themselves offering readings of their purpose and importance for Aristotle's overall thinking. Thinking about concepts such as substance, quality, and quantity easily evoked discussion of metaphysical and semantic problems.

Semantics and syllogisms

Aristotle was of course not the first who tried to express his understanding of the world in clear language, but he did pioneer the *systematic* analysis of words, sentences, and arguments. This activity produced a body of work which became known collectively as his logical works (combined also referred to as *Organon*, 'instrument' or 'tool'). We now count among Aristotle's works on

'logic' (*logikê*) his *Rhetoric*, the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*, the *Topics*, *On interpretation*, and the *Categories*. Some of them are mentioned in the list of his works surviving in Diogenes Laertius in the early third century CE (DL 5. 22–25):

On Genera and Species

On Contradictions

On the Various Meaning of Terms . . .

Syllogisms

Eight books of *Prior Analytics*

Two books of *Greater Posterior Analytics*

Definitions (prefixed to the *Topics*)

Two books of *Topics* criticising the *Definitions*

On Interpretation, one book

As is clear from the underlined titles, this list does not provide a full overlap with the works we now consider as authored by Aristotle (those underlined are certainly confirmed). This is partly because titles were not always attached to works originally, and partly because the list originates in two earlier lists which have been collated without aiming to be complete.⁶ His successors continued his work, but to what extent this meant a simple continuity in doctrine is not always clear. This should not be a point to criticise them: as Barnes has put it so aptly, they 'showed imagination and originality'.⁷ At times their language may have been different, and the questions they asked not quite the same, but theirs was a genuine attempt to build on and refine the system.

Aristotle's works in logic often start the study of meaning from common usage, but then develop a technical vocabulary to deal with the complexity of natural processes, identification of species, causal relations, and deeper questions of the essence of natural things and their underlying causes. Plato's work is always in the background (even when Aristotle disagrees with him, e.g. when he criticises his method of collection and division in *APost*). The treatise considered foundational, *Categories*, is an intriguing work. It presents us with some fundamental abstract concepts, which may well represent an attempt to

comprehensively explain the world around us. The word ‘category’ is here not used in quite the same sense as the modern word, since its meaning was more comparable to ‘label’ or ‘characterisation’ (from the Greek verb *katêgorein*, ‘to accuse, to attach a certain property to something’). The ten categories Aristotle comes up with (see further below) suggest that in this work Aristotle tried to set out a conceptual map of reality. The work divides roughly into three parts, introductory chapters (1–4), the actual ‘categories’, and the so-called post-paedicamenta.

The ancient commentators in late antiquity understood the work in this way. The Platonist Simplicius in particular can assist us in clarifying structure and purpose of the work in his commentary on the *Categories* (*in Cat.*). Preliminary issues take up the first 20 pages, starting with the aim (*skopos*, *in Cat.* 9.4–13.26), looking at what *katêgoriai* mean (‘ten simple things’, ‘genera of being’) and noting that they are derived from a term for ‘accusation’ (*katêgoria*, *in Cat.* 17. 1–4). This explains in part why Aristotle’s use in this work is unlike the common language use (*in Cat.* 17. 29), because it has now developed a new meaning, *predication*.⁸ The work is compact and difficult, because its language is technical and the subject complex, but it put analysis of language and logic on a firm footing.

Lacking the symbols now used in modern logic, Aristotle would spell out in words the relations between linguistic items and what they referred to in the world. We may imagine him in his classroom trying to convey to his students an understanding of the world in the broadest possible terms: coming up with high level concepts which may comprehensively represent everything around us is not an easy task. Perhaps we could compare it to the kind of modern game in which one has to guess in a limited number of questions what the other person has in mind: the questioning usually begins at a very general level (‘Is it animal, vegetable, or mineral?’) and progresses to narrow down the range of possible directions. This form of ‘triage’ or process of elimination is the equivalent of generically dividing up the sum total of knowledge into just three major categories—a powerful way of dividing up the world into few concepts.

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Similarly, Aristotle offered ten categories of ‘things said’ to understand the world—‘highest kinds’ we might call them: substance, quantity, quality, action and undergoing, relatives, having, priority, posteriority, simultaneity, and change. As we will see, these so-called ten categories are not all part of a rigorous scheme of logical categories, and they caused later ancient philosophers a few headaches to sort out what Aristotle had really intended by choosing them and how he arrived at this list and its particular constituents. But if we accept one scholar’s suggestion that they were developed discursively

in the class room, it may help us to see how they were a good didactic tool to begin looking at the world with new concepts—a finite set of abstract notions that allow for generalisation.⁹ It came to replace the Platonic division into ‘the absolute’ and ‘the relative’.¹⁰

Aristotle’s meticulous and systematic approach becomes abundantly clear if we briefly consider the content and aims of the individual works. *On interpretation* and *Categories* deal with basic semantics and concepts, providing a solid basis for further analysis and argument. The *Topics* and *Rhetoric* deal with arguments within a competitive context, the former usually referred to as dialectical reasoning (in which common or accepted views play a role), while the latter aims at persuasion (mostly featuring in the political arena). The two *Analytics* are more technical and discuss formal argumentative forms, including the syllogism.¹¹ But the so-called *Posterior Analytics* is also concerned with the proper justification of ‘scientific reasoning’, fundamental research questions, and the different permutations of syllogistic arguments. Its role has puzzled scholars, but the current consensus is that it represents the ideal model and spelling out the process of valid reasoning of knowledge acquisition based on valid first principles.

Although he was building on previous achievements, in particular the pioneering work of the sophists (on rhetoric and fallacies) and Plato (in *Theaetetus*, *Parmenides*, *Sophist*), Aristotle created a new discipline with his writings. His methodical analysis of word meanings, propositions, and argumentative structures was unprecedented in detail and scope. His work became a core subject in the later tradition, but was also subject of much study among the immediate successors.¹²

Logic in Hellenistic times

Later Peripatetics commented on Aristotle’s works to do with reasoning, language, and logic (esp. *Categories*) across the centuries, whether with a strict focus on reasoning and argument or in other contexts (such as metaphysics or rhetoric: the basic concepts substance, quality, and quantity deal with fundamental aspects of being, so that there is a frequent overlap between logic and ontology). From Theophrastus (ca. 350 BCE) down to Boethius and his teacher Andronicus (ca. 50 BCE) engagement with the work led to rethinking the organisation or definition of the categories.

The earliest followers of Aristotle were keen to emulate their master, as later ancient reports suggest. In his *Commentary on Aristotle’s Categories* 7,14 the late Platonist Philoponus (ca. 480–550 CE) claimed that Aristotle’s successors Eudemus, Phoenias, and Theophrastus wrote similar works in imitation of Aristotle, implying that a certain unity existed among them (fr. 71E FHSG).

We need not go along with such attempts at ideological coherence of the overall doctrine, since (as we will see below) there is sufficient evidence from other sources that Theophrastus, Eudemus, Phantias (or Phaeinias), and other Peripatetics did not always follow Aristotle, even if all wrote works on topics belonging to the study of language and logic (DL 5, Simplicius, Philoponus). Their autonomy is also clear from a lost work of Alexander of Aphrodisias, which was entitled *On the disagreement between Aristotle and his associates concerning [syllogisms with] mixed premises*.¹³

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Theophrastus of Eresus (ca. 371–287 BCE), Aristotle's immediate successor, made several contributions to different areas of logic, all of which are supplementary to Aristotle's. Here we may briefly review his contributions on the different building blocks of the Aristotelian system of assertion, deductive reasoning, syllogisms, and predication. One scholar has recently commented that 'Peripatetic logic in the Hellenistic period is the logic of Theophrastus'.¹⁴ Because he was, as the claim goes, busying himself improving and refining Aristotle's system, in particular the hypothetical syllogism (see below), his work has been characterised as 'backward looking'. This seems a rather harsh judgement, if we consider the surviving material carefully.

The fragmentary texts available to us come from a range of later writers and are printed as fr. 69–136 FHSG. The list of Theophrastus' works in Diogenes Laertius' overview (DL 5. 42–50) contains a considerable number of titles related to logic, showing his broad contribution in this area. DL's list starts with five works:

Prior Analytics (three books)

Posterior Analytics (seven books)

On the Analysis of Syllogisms (one book)

Epitomê of Analytics (one book)

Two books of *Classified Topics*

Even if we make allowances for the modest length of a 'book' in the fourth century (one book roll measured up to ten feet), this is quite a production. But there is more. He also wrote:

Affirmation and Negation (DL 5. 44)

Definitions (5. 45)

Compendium of Arguments

On Judging Syllogisms

Solutions (5. 46)

Rhetorical Precepts (5. 47)

Two books of *Refutations* (5. 49)

On (the Fallacy known as) the Liar (5. 49)

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This list leaves little doubt that Theophrastus studied and wrote about almost every aspect of Aristotelian logic. Unfortunately we have to reconstruct his ideas from a small set of fragments which do not always allow a good sense of his skills and range. It will be useful to review some of the surviving materials to get a better understanding of his work on dialectic and logic, with some comments on rhetoric although we shall briefly discuss its role in politics in [Chapter 4](#).

Theophrastus revised the system of dialectical predication, proposing to subsume the four so-called predicables under one common denominator. ‘Predicables’ are the labels for a type of predication representing four notions that were involved in connecting two terms (subject and attribute), in this case genus, definition, distinctive property, accident. This system, which Aristotle used to structure the *Topika* as a whole, constituted the analytical tool for testing claims made by one’s opponent. Apparently, Theophrastus wanted to simplify the system by bringing three of the four under definition (all except ‘accident’, *sumbebēkos*). It is possible that he aimed for ‘a single universal method’, as Alexander of Aphrodisias surmised in the second century CE (fr. 124A FHSG):

Theophrastus too in his *Topics* being eager to provide a single universal method, separated accident from the rest as not being subsumed under definition, but, in trying to subordinate the rest to definition, he made the subject less clear.

Alexander’s criticism aside, such an approach would fit the general tendency of trying to find (and if possible enhance) the coherence in the work of his teacher and colleague: considering some of these attributes as somehow ‘definitional’ is not altogether unreasonable. How successful this was is difficult to say from the surviving evidence. Alexander, who may well have had

Theophrastus' *Topics* to hand, thought that the move of separating 'accident' (non-essential feature) from the rest made things 'less clear' (a similar criticism is voiced much later by Simplicius, fr. 127A FHSG). But most successors did much to bring the intended system towards greater coherence.

The sources often mention Theophrastus (of Eresus), Eudemus (of Rhodes), and Phaenias (of Eresus) together when it comes to their work in logic; whether this means that they collaborated or whether it is the result of how the later historiography chose to place them together, is not always clear and not very important. Both could be the case. The later Arabic philosopher Averroes (1126–1198) still knew about the work Theophrastus did on dialectic, as we can see from a comment in his *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Topics* 6.12–14: 'We will enumerate these topics in this order and in this division, for this is what Themistius did and before him Theophrastus'. What he adds is further evidence for a more independent approach of the Eresian: 'this procedure is at variance with the order of Aristotle's book' (fr. 132 FHSG = p. 603–4 Jéhamy; trans. Gutas).¹⁵ Averroes offers an explanation for this variation: it fits the work's character better and is good pedagogy (a point repeated *ibid.*, p. 620 Jéhamy). Thus both Alexander and Averroes confirm that Theophrastus added his own twist to the material, probably for reasons of pedagogy and appropriateness. Of course we need not press this point of intellectual independence, since the successors also emulated their master in many ways, in particular the type of works they produced and which philosophical notions lay at the core. A good example is the *Categories* for which we have identical titles in the book lists of Theophrastus, Eudemus, and Phaenias—a fact that often could lead to disputes over authenticity, as the commentators liked to point out (e.g. fr. 71–73 FHSG).¹⁶

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Another area in which Theophrastus made a contribution was that of the hypothetical syllogism. So far as we can establish from the (late) sources, Aristotle did not write on the subject, but had planned to write on it.¹⁷ The lists of the works for his successors Theophrastus, Strato, and Eudemus include works on logic, but we know little about the views of the latter two on hypotheticals.¹⁸ The argumentative form of two premises and a conclusion, in which one proposition is hypothetical, was first hinted at by Aristotle.¹⁹ The evidence comes from various sources, one of which, Alexander of Aphrodisias, confirms that Theophrastus had supplemented the arguments from hypothesis, which Aristotle hinted at as being more abundant than he was describing in his *Prior Analytics* (*APr.* 1.44). Two examples can illustrate the type of arguments as a group. In slightly formalised format, a hypothetical syllogism could look like this: If A, then B; but C: therefore D. A second form looks like this: either A or B; but C; therefore D. Barnes (1985: 131–2) has argued that Alexander's

report on these two locates them more securely in the early Peripatos, but that a third one (a negated form of the second type: Not [both A or B]; but C: therefore D) is probably of Stoic origin (ibid. 132). But the first and second, he notes, also had a major role in Stoic logic. The Stoic system of logic, so different in its focus, created a major rival to Aristotle's syllogistic logic.

The second century CE physician-philosopher Galen (*Introduction to Logic* 7.2 = 13D SHARPLES) confirms that Boethus of Sidon, successor to Andronicus, wrote about the relationship between hypothetical arguments and categorical syllogistic, but unfortunately Galen gives us no further information.

Our sources indicate how Theophrastus discussed the theory of the categorical syllogism (fr. 90–97 FHSG, esp. the relation between the second and third figures), and modal logic (fr. 98A–110 FHSG). This kind of analysis could easily come from his works listed at DL 5. 42 (e.g. *Three Books of Prior Analytics*, *On the Analysis of Syllogisms*, *Epitomê of Analytics*). His activities in hypothetical syllogism are reported in Greek, Latin, and Arabic sources (fr. 111–113 FHSG). He even revised Aristotle's modal logic, the kind of deductive reasoning that involves the qualifications 'necessarily' or 'possibly'. In other words, these would be syllogisms with such 'modal qualifiers'. Modern logicians consider this part of his deductive system problematic and complex. Aristotle saw this as an extension to his original (assertoric) system of syllogisms. In brief, 'necessarily P' is the equivalent of 'not possibly P', and 'possibly P' the equivalent of 'not necessarily not P'.²⁰ When something is possibly the case, it can also be described as being not necessarily not the case. One of Theophrastus' proposals was to suggest that in a chain of syllogistic reasoning the conclusion may follow the weaker minor premise, not the major (a kind of 'weakest-link-principle'; fr. 106A–E FHSG).

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After Theophrastus

While the sources often mention Aristotle and Theophrastus together, the evidence for the Peripatetics after Theophrastus is as a rule reporting individual contributions. Unfortunately, here too we are faced with sparse information preserved in fragments. A few examples drawn from these fragments for Strato, Phantias, and Eudemus may assist in gaining some insight into their engagement with Aristotle's logic and metaphysics. I add metaphysics here, because logic and metaphysics are closely connected; when we consider the categories, we are justified in understanding some of them as 'kinds of being', that is, universal classes of things at the highest level of abstraction ('substances' as essential entities, 'quality' and 'quantity' etc.; more on this below for Theophrastus'

Strato took a serious interest in logic which is confirmed in two ways: by the list of his works and a telling comment by the Stoic Chrysippus (fr. 14 = Plut. *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1045F): ‘In the third book on *Dialectic* Chrysippus says “Plato was serious about dialectic, and [so was] Aristotle, and their successors up to Polemo and Strato”’.²¹ Ironically, our source author, Plutarch, next reveals that Chrysippus accused them of presenting reasoning that was ‘blind and self-contradictory’. But we cannot take a Stoic’s polemical comments at face value. It seems undisputed, however, that Strato engaged with dialectic.

The list of Strato’s works in DL 5. 59–60 reveals his interest in dialectic, possible teaching it (5. 59 *Introduction to Topics*), and logic in a stricter sense of the word (5. 60 *On the [logically] Prior and Posterior, On the Prior Genus, On the Essential Attribute, On the More and Less*). His main contribution of note seems to have been his monograph *On Prior and Posterior*, as Simplicius informs us (*Comm. on Cat.* 422,21–423,33 Kalbfleisch = fr. 15 Sharples) in which he discusses modes of priority in response to Aristotle’s *Metaph.* book 5, a book full of definitions. Strato seems to have offered many illustrative examples: for instance, ‘the incomplete thing [said to be] prior to the complete thing will be placed under [priority in] time, since in all things completion comes last’ (fr. 15. 17–19). In other words, he seems to have tried to work through particular problems and attempted to place them in a hierarchy of priority and posteriority according to the more generic criteria of ‘time’, ‘order’, ‘potentiality’, ‘in nature’, and ‘in explanation’ (defined earlier, fr 15. 1–5). In a second extant fragment, Alexander of Aphrodisias tells us that Strato commented on the *topos* of relatives in which he made a mistake (*Comm. on Topika* 339,30–340,17 Wallies = fr. 16). The comment shows Strato reacted to Aristotle’s dialectical treatise, by adding a *topos* (‘commonplace argument’) on the point of relatives that are reciprocals: this involves an example where a claim has been made, in this particular case expressions which are similar grammatically, such as ‘falling short’ or ‘lack’. Now, if someone were to say that ‘lack’ is the genus (i.e., the overarching category) which includes ‘falling short’, a problem may arise. The two terms may be used in relation to the same circumstance, but they are not convertible, which for a Greek would become clear from the following considerations, as presented by Alexander (fr. 16. 14–18; trans. Sharples):

‘falling short’ is falling short *of* something, for [it is falling short] *of* what surpasses [it] and similarly ‘lack’ is lack *of* something, for [it is lack] *of* what is sufficient. But it is not also the case that both the things, with reference to which each of them is spoken of, reciprocate:

for surpassing is itself [surpassing] of something, for [it is surpassing] of what falls short, but what is sufficient does not also reciprocate. For what is sufficient is not said to be sufficient of lack. So ‘lack’ is not the genus [which includes] falling short.

Alexander then chides Strato for ‘wanting to make an innovation (*kainotomêsai* —a loaded term for unnecessary novelty) in a small matter’ [cf. ch. 2, p. 39] and thereby destroying something important: ‘for he disturbs the rule that all relatives are spoken of in relation to reciprocals’ (fr. 16. 2). ‘Reciprocate’ here stands for reversing the predication.

Theophrastus’ contemporary, Eudemus of Rhodos, wrote on a range of relevant topics in language and logic. His most quoted work is entitled *On Verbal Expression* (frs. 45–9 Stork = fr. 25–29 W.), which apparently dealt with the form of affirmations and questions, within the context of dialectic, as Alexander’s testimony suggests (*Commentary on the Topics* 69,13–70,12).

Phaenias, a close contemporary, also wrote on logic (nn. 3, 10), and the evidence suggests that he had a keen interest in a few particular aspects. One interesting passage in Alexander’s commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (to 990b15) shows how he expressed the view that the so-called ‘third man’ argument derives from the sophists, and that he attributed it to Polyxenus in his *Against Diodorus* (in *Metaph.* 84,16–21 = fr. 14 H and M). A further quotation in the same passage may well represent something he said in so many words. In the context of *Metaphysics* A.9, in which Aristotle was arguing against the Platonists, Phaenias reports that ‘the sophist Polyxenus introduced the “third man argument”’ as follows:

Polyxenus introduced the ‘third man argument’ (*ton triton anthrôpon*), when he said, if man exists by virtue of participation in and in communion with the form and man itself, it is necessary that there be (another) man, who will have his existence in relation to the idea [of man] (*pros tēn idean*). But he is not man itself who is the idea, by virtue of participation in the idea: nor is he any single man. It remains (sc. as a consequence) that there is some other ‘third man’ who has existence in the relation to the form.

Alexander adduces this ‘proof’ as one of four known to him, attributing some of the others to Eudemus in his *On Diction* (85,12–13 = fr. 45 Stork) and Aristotle in his *On Ideas* and the *Metaphysics*.

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A later report attributes additional moods to the syllogistic: ‘Aristo of Alexandria and several of the later Peripatetics add five further moods alongside the moods with a universal conclusion’ (pseudo-Apuleius, *On interpretation* xiii, p. 193, 16–20).²² Thus from Theophrastus (early third century BCE) down to Aristo of Alexandria (first century BCE) several clear changes and additions were proposed, confirming a lively engagement with Aristotle’s syllogistic

theory—even if details of the actual debates hardly survive.

First philosophy and logic: things or words?

The search for universally valid categories was a crucial element in Plato's and Aristotle's thought. The foregoing account of Peripatetic investigations in how language plays an important role in this already showed that logical categories can overlap with metaphysical ones. As later exegetes also suggested, the *Categories* could be interpreted as being about words and concepts, or about actual things ('beings', *ta onta*) which make up the real things in the world (e.g. substances and their properties). In other words, the work allows for a *logical* as well as an *ontological* interpretation. There is as yet no full agreement on whether the answer goes one way or the other.²³

One of his most influential works, Aristotle's so-called *Metaphysics* also deals with 'beings' / *ta onta*, but this time he is trying to establish whether there is a singular field of investigation that can study 'Being *qua* Being' (*Metaph.* Γ. 1–2, E. 1). It will be useful to remind ourselves that Aristotle himself did not put the work together as we have it nor did he come up with the title we use. The title's origin is disputed. The Greek phrase *ta meta ta physika* (literally: 'things coming after physics') was originally a phrase to describe the broader heading under which Andronicus placed related treatises of Aristotle's works (n.17). A similar phrase is first found in Plutarch (ca. 50–120 CE) as *hê meta ta physika pragmateia* ('the treatise after the physical books/topics'), who relates how part of the Aristotelian corpus came to Rome after Sulla had captured Athens in 87 BCE (*Life of Sulla* 26). The use of *meta* 'after' presumably refers to Andronicus' ordering of the tracts and essays he acquired from Athens. But Alexander has a slightly different interpretation: he speaks about 'wisdom or theology which Aristotle also calls *meta ta physika*' (*Comm. on Metaph.* 171, 5–7).²⁴

So while the modern term 'metaphysics' derives from this phrase, what descriptive label did Aristotle himself use? He saw himself engaged in the study of 'Being *qua* Being' (*Metaph.* 4.1) or 'first philosophy' (*hê prôtê philosophia*, e.g. *Movement of Animals* 700b). He considered the nature of Being in itself worth investigating, as a further step towards a more general understanding over and above the special disciplines (*epistêmai*). Whether we see this as a subject that naturally comes after (*meta*) the phenomena of nature (*ta physika*) is less relevant and was probably not how he saw it. But the essays combined under the title *Metaphysika* are concerned with what underpins all things, their ultimate causes of existence (and continuity). Thus a post-Aristotelian and rather harmless phrase has led to a semantically significant term for a whole discipline which attempts to study the fundamental concepts of the world.

Aristotle's metaphysical understanding of nature is characterised by a set of concepts that did not get rejected until the seventeenth century. As foundations of the physical world, he postulated substances (regarded as compounds of form and matter, a notion that was later labelled *hylomorphism*), actuality and potentiality (as explanatory notions for developmental stages of natural beings as well as artefacts), four causes (which he partly adopted from his predecessors but adapted for his own purposes), and the four qualities (which helped explain change in individual instances). There are problems with each of these, in particular *hylomorphism*, which came to describe the relationship between body and soul, and more generally, between the physical entity and its 'form'.

Regarding the body and the soul of animals (*zōia*), the former is the matter, i.e. that *in which* the form is instantiated, constituting its function or dynamic nature. Things get problematic when we consider in more detail the relative role of 'matter'. For example, Aristotle's prime example to clarify matter and form is to consider the bronze statue.²⁵ A statue is made *of* bronze (its matter) and has a form (a human body). But what is the form of (a lump of) bronze before it is made into a statue? Clearly the inherently typical 'form' of a lump of bronze is its *lack or privation* of form (its 'lumpiness', if you will), while that of the statue is its human or divine shape (with possible added meaning). In the case of the statue, we know that the bronze 'is only contingently enformed' by the shape of a human or a god. And there is another problem: Aristotle claims that the soul-body relation is such that the matter of human is *intrinsically bound up* with its form, the soul (*De an.* 2.1, 412b25–6). In other words, while the statue can lose its form and go back to being a bronze lump, the human cannot lose its soul and remain a human body.²⁶ On top of this oddity, an inconsistency looms in *De an.* 3.5, where a comment seems to suggest that the soul (or part of it) is divine and can outlive the body.

His students did challenge some of Aristotle's ideas, but we only know about Theophrastus' discussion of metaphysical concepts and related points on theology in Strato.²⁷ Theophrastus (and the next scholar Strato, discussed below) articulated a number of 'concerns' which can be found in later sources and in his own work on metaphysics. Dimitri Gutas, who studied the Arabic tradition of the work, has secured the title *On First Principles*.²⁸ It includes Theophrastus' views on change and alteration (*Simplicius Comm. on Phys.* 566,18). Theophrastus famously questioned the validity of Aristotle's definition of place (fr. 146–49 FHSG, already noted in Regenbogen 1940: 1549), and time (fr. 150–151C FHSG). As we saw in [Chapter 2](#), his queries concerning Aristotle's concept of place as a two-dimensional surface of an object were available to the late Platonist Simplicius (writing ca. 530–40 CE) who imposed the interpretation of his own teacher, Damascius (ca. 458–ca. 540) on the

passage.

When Aristotle asked what it meant for something to exist, he answered it in an interesting way, proposing a novel model. While his distinction between perceptible and unstable properties on the surface and a more permanent ‘substrate’ owes a debt to previous thinkers (esp. Plato), his implementation of the suggestion that we need to assume an underlying stable thing (*hypokeimenon*) to explain permanence through change was novel. To clarify the permanence of seemingly changing objects he retained the notion of material cause, but he added three more: the formal, efficient, and final causes. Together these four causes or principles outlined a teleological model of the natural world in which the inherent nature of biological entities included matter, form, and a goal-oriented driving force. In this way he did not need to appeal to external archetypal ‘Forms’ (as Plato did), nor have a cosmos without a deliberate plan or direction (as Democritus did), but he ‘recycled’ the four elements of Empedocles avoiding the inertia of matter, so that an appeal to additional ‘forces’ such as Love and Hate (attraction and repulsion) was not required. While we review some of these, it will be important to keep in mind that Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* as we have it now owes its structure and arrangement to a later ‘editor’. Apart from the ‘historical’ introduction in book A which reviews previous theories of causes or principles (with additions in book 2, or ‘small alpha’), most books have a specific theme: e.g. book 4 (or Gamma) is on ‘Being *qua* Being’; book 5 (Delta) is on important terminology; book 6 on what kind of scientific discipline we are dealing with; book 7 (Zeta) on ‘substance’.²⁹

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Theophrastus adopted a critical stance with regard to several important questions and problems (see, e.g. Simplicius, *Commentary on Phys.* 604,5–11, 639,15–22). Theophrastus concerned himself in some detail with problems arising from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Theophrastus’ work is rather short (Laks-Most 1993) and is a set of loosely connected arguments and queries, evaluating certain claims regarding principles. Scholars now believe that this work may have been added to the corpus as attachment to the latter’s *Metaphysics*, because it was thought to be by Aristotle.

Theophrastus tends to state his concerns in the form of questions; to the unsuspecting reader his responses seem to suggest that he does not really know the answer. This is more the result of his caution than a sign of ignorance. We now consider this his aporetic style, possibly a result of a pedagogical context or his personality (or both). Whatever the reason, his puzzles about issues are different from Aristotle’s philosophical puzzles (*aporiai*, esp. in book 4), because they express doubts *about* Aristotle’s solutions. For example, he points out that

one principle can make the universe move (which would make it an external cause), but cannot account for any diversity within it (i.e., its internal plurality); then again he reminds us that two or more principles *may* jeopardise its coherence. When he raises these points and advocates an *oikeios tropos*, ‘appropriate method’ (*Metaph.* 9a11 R.-F), he shows us important features of his approach in this arena and elsewhere.³⁰

On the question of what kind of principles there are, Theophrastus offers two possibilities: they are either the ultimate source of things (a foundationalist answer), or else they are general laws governing everything (that is, rules of practice). By restricting the number of principles (an issue which he also discussed from a historical perspective by reviewing previous views, fr. 224–230 FHSG = Simpl. in *Phys.* 22,22–28,31) and the scope of their influence in the physical realm, he can keep certain accidental occurrences (such as thunder in natural philosophy, but also evil in the ethical context) outside the range of events with a final cause. This is in line with his attempt to reach a limited teleology (Th. *Metaph.* 7a19–b9, 10a21–23).³¹

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The view that teleology in nature is limited can be read as implicit criticism of Aristotelian teleology (Repici 1977). His position is in line with his tendency to allow for alternative explanations or a multiple-cause view.³² That this has practical consequences is also clear when, for instance, he tries to accommodate anomalies in botany within the Aristotelian framework (*Causes of Plants* 5), since their existence complicates the Aristotelian position that in nature ‘nothing happens in vain’. Clearly he felt a need to discuss the intractable in nature for the sake of comprehensiveness, no matter what the consequences.³³ Once again it is clear that he was not afraid to point out problems in the Aristotelian edifice of knowledge. This seems never to have seriously threatened either his status as a Peripatetic or the school’s credibility: a philosophically viable outlook came with the potential to evaluate and improve the basic tenets of the founder.

Theophrastus’ focus, then, was on reviewing the metaphysical foundations and exploring possible contradictions or omissions. This may have arisen in the school while he was continuing to teach Aristotelian ideas, but one can also see that his evaluation of the overall coherence of the philosophical edifice of his predecessor was quite technical and far-reaching, so that this kind of debate would seem more suitable for advanced students, if not just his peers. Theophrastus’ critical assessments of the various metaphysical ideas (esp. principles) reveal a meticulous mind, keen to offer serious refinements to an elaborate system which he largely supports.

We have some stray remarks from Strato which we could place in the same context of metaphysics and theology. We already saw that Strato may have written works on relevant topics: *On the gods*, *On principles*, *On the Void*, *On the heaven* (DL 5. 59; not in DL: *On Being*, a title found in Proclus = fr. 24 Sharples). He also declared god redundant (fr. 18).³⁴ In addition, Seneca (*ap. Augustine City of God* 6.10 = fr. 22 Sharples) wittily sums up his view on god as having made ‘a god without mind’ in contrast to Plato who made ‘a god without body’. The fact that Strato talked about a god at all may surprise us, but it can easily be brought into connection with Aristotle’s discussion of the prime mover, a divine entity that is the ultimate cause of the universe (it also stops the infinite regress to earlier causes of motion and generative processes, *Metaph.* 12. 6–10; similar argument at *Phys.* 8.6–8). Most Hellenistic philosophers weighed in on the debate regarding a divine power or notions of design. We know that Theophrastus regarded the heavens as divine (see Proclus’ *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus* vol. 2, 122. 10–17 Diehl), while Epicurus sided with Aristotle and against Plato and the Stoics ‘in denying conscious design in nature’.³⁵

Other responses to topics in Aristotelian metaphysics within the school are not extant, although some relevant material can be found in the later commentaries on the *Categories*. We know of textual emendations in the first century BCE (Eudorus).³⁶ We also know that Alexander wrote a commentary on it, but this incompletely preserved work falls outside the scope of this volume.³⁷

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The first century debate

Our survey so far has demonstrated that the evidence for Peripatetic philosophy became thin on the ground after 200 BCE. The gap in our evidence for the period between ca. 220 and ca. 80 BCE cannot be resolved at present. The sources on the school heads and successions (DL, Ammonius) do not offer matching reports, and only some anecdotal evidence on individual Peripatetics has come down to us. Once we get to the first century BCE, the situation changes, because of the revived interest in Aristotle’s works—importantly after the Roman general Sulla captured Athens and brought the library of the Peripatos back to Rome (89–88 BCE). It has recently become clear how intensive the engagement with *Categories* became in this period.³⁸ Two figures stand out in their involvement in reviving the study of Aristotle: Andronicus of Rhodes and Boethus. It is possible that Andronicus was the teacher of Boethus (Strabo, *Geogr.* 16. 2. 24; Ammonius *Comm. on Categ.* 3. 8), but there is very little evidence to go beyond this tenuous connection. They are good examples

of how we might characterise Peripatetics as having different motivations to read Aristotle's work. On a sliding scale, they range from committed followers to selective readers to occasional (and even antipathetic) readers.

Andronicus and Boethus may have been involved in establishing a new curriculum for the study of Aristotle. Boethus proposed to make *Physics* the best starting point, but Andronicus preferred the *Categories* (so Philoponus *Commentary on the Categories* 5,15–20 = 5A SHARPLES). This debate about the pedagogical priority of logic had started before Andronicus, but became more important now because Aristotle's works, written in different Greek from the everyday Hellenistic *koinê*, required linguistic clarification, while the philosophical ideas certainly were in need of doctrinal exegesis.³⁹ Declaring logic a tool (*organon*, DL 5. 28) in philosophy, not a part of it as the Stoics had argued, also determined its use for persuasion or good judgement. There is evidence for the view that Andronicus and Boethus regarded the *Categories* as didactic and introductory: it was considered especially suitable for beginners, because it allowed for an understanding of the genera of all things (general division of how we verbalise the world into things and their attributes). They regarded these as 'pre-technical outlines', which could actualise 'our innate preconceptions'.⁴⁰ The possible unpacking of this kind of argument and its details can be retraced on the basis of the later commentators.⁴¹

In their discussion of the categories Andronicus and Boethus made a significant change: they regarded form as 'being in the category of quality'.⁴² Aristotle himself did not take this position: form is related to substance, not as an attribute, but as an ineliminable constituent. Andronicus, however, attempted to associate 'being' with a qualitative property of things. Thus Griffin persuasively argues that Andronicus proposed the reading of the *Categories* as 'articulating *proleipseis* ['outlines'] in something much like a Stoic sense, also illustrating and grounding its forward position in the curriculum' (Griffin 2015, 67).

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These fragmentary remains show a renewed debate of questions regarding language and logic among Aristotle's successors. The first-century revival in particular contributed much to importance of Aristotle's logic. The *Categories* soon became the primary text to start the study of Aristotelian thought, but Andronicus' emphasis on division and definition also suggests a further Platonist influence, most likely via Antiochus. It is with these factors in mind that we can understand how it ended up as the core introduction to logic and philosophy under Porphyry (ca. 300 CE) who placed it in prime position in the Neoplatonic curriculum, where we hear of many exegetical writings on this work (commentaries).⁴³

Dialectic and rhetoric

Another set of works that was part of the argumentative arsenal in the fourth century dealt with dialectic and rhetoric. The sophists started to produce writings clarifying the workings of persuasive speech, and Plato contributed further helpful comments on the rhetorical tradition. In the *Gorgias* he shows us the great sophist Gorgias defend the power of rhetoric. In the *Phaedrus* he presents a discussion on the art of rhetoric. But his dialogues are hardly rhetorical handbooks, which we know already existed and would be much better sources for the *practice* of rhetoric. Again Aristotle's contribution was fundamental, especially on how to organise and conceptualise ideas regarding the use of arguments, whether for training in school context (dialogic contest) or in public affairs (speeches in councils and courts). His *Topika* and *Rhetorika* covered both these areas in a well-organised way. In *Topics* 1 and 8 he clarifies the goal and debating techniques clearly (their programmatic role is recognised in Smith's translation of both in one volume). But there is also an applied aspect to the technique, which he mentions in *Topics*. 1. 14, implying that it has value for the sciences (*epistēmas*).⁴⁴

Theophrastus, Eudemus, and Phaenias also wrote on dialectic and rhetoric. Eudemus' works do not survive, but the fragments allow a glimpse of his activities in this area. On the overall role of the dialectician he commented that 'the dialectician establishes little but his main power is in overthrowing' (Alex. Aphrod. in *Top.* 131.14–19 = fr. 28 W.).⁴⁵ This broad description focuses on the role of dialectic as a technique in argumentative attack, taking it as mostly destructive. This reading of the Aristotelian concept of dialectic echoes the three formal objectives stated in *Top.* 1.2, but leaves out of consideration the wider use of dialectic which Aristotle articulated as a fourth point—almost as an afterthought (*Top.* 1.2, 101a35 ff.) declaring dialectic also useful for scientific investigation into basic principles, starting from *endoxa*, 'reputable opinions', i.e., views which are in good repute supported by some or everyone.

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A very useful addition to our knowledge of dialectic is the fact that Theophrastus provides us with a clear definition of the dialectical *topos*—something which Aristotle himself omitted. Aristotle's *Topics* aims to systematise the dialectical debating practices.⁴⁶ It contains roughly 300 *topoi* (argumentative approaches and objections), neatly organised under four basic headings, the 'predicables'; that is, four ways in which predication in assertions can be characterised. In Aristotelian terms, this means by way of genus (*Top.* 4), by distinctive property (*idion*, *Top.* 5), by definition (*horos* or *horismos*, *Top.* 6), or accidental belonging (*kata sumbebēkos*, *Top.* 7). Each type is described in

great detail and with many examples. Despite this elaborate description of the *topoi*, a clear and explicit definition is lacking in the *Topics*—perhaps because it seemed too obvious. Aristotle’s *Topika* created a clearly organised overview of the techniques in dialectical debate which originated in the Academy and the Lyceum.

Often translated as ‘commonplace’, the *topos* is an argumentative strategy or principle on which dialectical reasoning is based. Here is Theophrastus’ definition (fr. 122B FHSG):

The *topos* is a starting-point or fundamental principle, from which we take the starting-points (of argument) about each matter. It is limited in compass, but unlimited in respect to individual cases.

Theophrastus also makes a clear distinction between *topos* (‘commonplace’) and *parangelma* (‘precept’), suggesting they relate to each other as do common (or universal) terms and specific topics (fr. 123 FHSG). Overall Theophrastus’ comments on language advance grammar and style, with a notable emphasis on the use of appropriate language in each particular field. Relevant book titles in this area are also listed in DL:

5. 42 Two books of *Classified Topics*

Polemical discussion on the Theory of Eristic Argument

5. 43 Eighteen books of *Refutative Arguments*

Three books of *Polemical Objections*

5. 45 Two books of *Sophisms*

On the Solution of Syllogisms

5. 49 *Refutative Arguments* in two books

This wide-ranging set of works supports the image of Theophrastus as engaging with most aspects of Aristotle’s logic, but clearly in a way that was building on his predecessor’s work. His particular interest in refutation stands out, as does the focus on sophistic reasoning.

Epistemology

After the foregoing sketch of Peripatetic work on logic and reasoning, it will be appropriate to finish the chapter with some comments on epistemology (theory of knowledge), which not only featured prominently in Hellenistic philosophy, but also stands at the interface between the study of language and how this reflects the world. Despite its Greek roots the word ‘epistemology’ is of course a modern one. Yet it is clear that Aristotle introduced a high(er) degree of order to this field of study which aims to answer the question ‘how do we know what we know?’. It involves a theory of perception, of valid reasoning, and a proper understanding of logical starting points (or: first principles). That the pursuit of knowledge became closely linked to analysing language is not a surprise, but it required a theoretical grasp of assertoric logic to ensure that claims about the world are valid. Aristotle had led the way. That said, it must also be emphasised that there is not one work that represents his ‘theory’ of knowledge. Put in modern terms, we need to reconstruct such a theory from several works which contain passages offering theoretical considerations that explain the acquisition, retention, and justification of knowledge.

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The *Posterior Analytics* 2. 19 (*APo*) offers the most useful starting point for a sketch, in combination with parts of the *On sense perception*, *On the soul*. In *NE* 6 and *Metaph.* 4 and 6 we find further information on how Aristotle articulates the practical use of intellectual virtues (*EN*) and what the underlying foundations are (*Metaph.*). In the *APo* 2.19 Aristotle sets out some sound principles: crudely put, we acquire knowledge through the senses, we synthesise the specific sense data into a more coherent image, we retain it in our soul (role of memory), and we reason about its truth value by way of propositions and inference (99b26–100a8).

It has been noted by scholars that the passage may well contain a response to Plato’s *Meno*, where he asked the question how we learn, including the famous paradox how it is that we can make a start finding out (about) something we do not know.⁴⁷ Aristotle is more explicit in reasoning *about* the foundations logically, which questions one should ask (and which not), and how to establish definitions and demonstrations to arrive at knowledge that is secure. Here he may also follow Plato in assuming there is a important difference between belief (*doxa*) and scientific knowledge (*epistēmē*). Both agree that knowledge is not perception. Plato had tried to formulate what secure knowledge is and defined at one point as ‘true belief with an account’ (*Tht.* 201d–210a; cf. *Meno* 98a). The difficulty of his aporetic procedure is that the dialogue ends up rejecting all suggested definitions (knowledge is not perception; knowledge is not true belief; knowledge is not true belief supported by an account), though there is an intriguing, undisputed premise at the start of the *Theaetetus* that

wisdom is knowledge (145e5). Such a claim is not very helpful in and of itself, but may point in a certain direction.

Aristotle stays rather close to his teacher (*EN* 1139a5–15) when he defines *epistēmē* in a two-pronged definition: in line with the two parts of the rational soul he proposes to distinguish between a ‘calculating part (*to logistikon*) and the scientific part (*to epistēmonikon*)’, where “the calculating part” considers things which admit of change whereas with the scientific part [considers] things which do not admit of change’.⁴⁸ The *logistikon* is discursive and deals with the sensory impressions, while the *epistēmonikon* extracts true and stable knowledge. But in his *Posterior Analytics* he describes a fully deductive system, structured according to four basic questions. The purpose seems to be to justify knowledge *after it has been acquired*. He clearly offers good reason why not all knowledge is demonstrable, in particular because one needs to have ‘pre-existing knowledge in order to gain new knowledge’ (*APo* 2.19, 99b26–29).⁴⁹

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Theophrastus followed suit. As we already saw, he wrote on dialectical reasoning, but he also studied the broader questions of the origin and truthfulness of our knowledge. We have an interesting passage which claims to report on Theophrastus’ notion of the ‘criterion of truth’ (*kritērion*), preserved by the sceptic and physician Sextus Empiricus in his summary of the Peripatetic theory of the ‘double criterion’.⁵⁰ The general tendency of his report about Theophrastus fits the information we have elsewhere: knowledge comes from the senses and thought, and therefore they maintain that the ‘criterion’ (truth measure for justified knowledge) is also two-fold: ‘perception for perceptible things, thought for thinkable things’. (Sext. Emp. *M* 7.218 = part of fr. 301A FHSG). It is, however, uncertain whether Theophrastus used the term *kritērion*, and it would seem unlikely (on the reasons for doubting this, see [Chapter 5](#), p. 136). That said, it is clear that he joined in the debate on the certainty of knowledge, and offered his own empiricist view.

The question of how damaging the sceptical stance could be for any knowledge claim became a major concern for all philosophers who believed that firm knowledge is possible, the Aristotelians included. One reason for this emphasis was the fact that the Platonic Academy would take a more sceptical turn with Arcesilaus (315–241 BCE). In addition, a major debate between Academics and Stoics led the way in sharpening up the discourse and terminology on this particular issue: against the sceptical stance of the Academy the Stoics would place their notion of ‘firm grasp’ of the truth (*katalēpsis*), an epistemological concept that they presented as distinctly possible, even if requiring a well-prepared mind and privileged understanding of reality. The Stoics also distinguished less firm states of knowing, tied to the impressions we

get from objects and how they are processed. Their position is formed in clear opposition to Academic scepticism.⁵¹

The first- (or second-) century CE Peripatetic Aristocles of Messene took up the challenge against the sceptical position and developed an aggressive polemic against the followers of Pyrrho, an extreme sceptic who no longer spoke but only pointed, and the Cyrenaics, a small group who refused to commit to sense impressions. In Aristocles' ten-volume work *On Philosophy* he started his argument with the fundamental consideration that 'before anything we must consider our own knowledge; for if it is our nature to know nothing, then there is no longer any need to inquire about anything else' (Eusebius, *PE* 14.18.1 = fr. 4 Chiesara). His attack on the Cyrenaics focused on the consequences of their primary claim that we can only know our own mental states (as 'representational experiences' of objects and affects) and little else outside of us. Aristocles refutes this on the basis of Aristotelian premises (his arguments are discussed in [Chapter 6](#)). His attack on the Pyrrhonists, the extreme sceptics, makes use of a principle, which Barnes has called 'the theory of the double *kritêrion*' (see below). Sextus gives a summary of the theory at *M.* 7. 217–18 (trans. Barnes 2007b):

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According to Aristotle and Theophrastus, and the Peripatetics in general, insofar as a nature of things at the highest level is two-fold (because some items, as I have already said, are perceptible and others thinkable), the criterion is two-fold—perception for perceptible things and thought for thinkable things.

(Common to them both, as Theophrastus said, is the [self]evident.)

The text, which has a parallel in Stobaeus (*Selections* 1.18), claims that there are 'two sorts of items in the world, the perceptible and the thinkable' which are judged by perception and thought respectively.⁵² The passage was already quoted above when we touched on Theophrastus' views on epistemology (fr. 301 FHSG).

We can learn a bit more about the ongoing discussion of the theory in the lines following Sextus' initial statement (*M.* 7. 218–222) and in Porphyry's comments on the theory (*Commentary on Ptolemy's Harmonics* 17. 13–25), so a few more comments are in order.⁵³ Sextus' further clarification seems to expound a way in which thinking gives rise to general concepts: memory, imagination, and thought all play a role in us forming notions of a particular individual in our soul ('motion of the rational imagination which is called intellect . . . forming an imagination of Dio's form in the soul'). Sextus next adds at the end of the passage that 'this motion of the soul the Peripatetics call intellect and thought according to its different manifestations—intellect insofar

as it is capacity and thought insofar as it is an activity'.⁵⁴ Other (even later) sources comment on the way in which Theophrastus justified knowledge claims, in particular with regard to physics: Simplicius confirms the important view that 'the truth about natural principles' should be pursued by way of sense perception, quoting Theophrastus' own words from his *Physics* book 1 (fr. 143 FHSG), while Philoponus presents the reasoning of Theophrastus in support of the bodily nature of natural things, claiming that Theophrastus offers a more complete deduction than Aristotle, because he explicates his 'minor premise' more fully (fr. 144A.29–34 FHSG):

If then natural things are either bodies, or have their being in bodies, and both of these are composite, all composite things have elements and causes and principles; for it is the simple things that are the elements of what is composite; so natural things have elements and causes and principles. It is in this way that he established the minor premise.

Thus we learn that Theophrastus felt compelled to offer an epistemological justification for our knowledge of natural things as composites, because 'this is not obvious' (144A.4). We may conclude with the observation that he dealt with the important question how we know what we know in both his physics and logic.

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Conclusion

This chapter aimed primarily to show that Aristotelian philosophy after Aristotle did continue in the area of logic, reasoning, and epistemology. Limited evidence makes a well-rounded account very difficult, but it was possible to throw some light on previously dark corners of the tradition, thanks to more recent progress in unearthing and studying materials tucked away in much later works of considerable complexity (Sextus, Porphyry, Philoponus, Simplicius).

The successors added thoughtful observations and components to the Aristotelian system. This complementary approach made sense for two reasons: (1) Aristotle did not cover all aspects of logic; (2) the parts he did cover were not always flawless or complete. Theophrastus and Eudemus emerged as the main supplier of new material, expanding the hypothetical syllogisms. The overall importance of Aristotelian logic cannot be underestimated. By the first century the works reemerged in Rome and created a new industry of organising and studying Aristotle's thought.

This renewed interest and study also led to further pressing questions regarding the role of logic and its relation to other areas of philosophy.

Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 140–ca. 220 CE) also showed a keen interest in Aristotle’s logical works, as is clear from his extant commentaries on *Prior Analytics* and the *Topika* (those on the *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *Posterior Analytics* are lost).⁵⁵ He had extensive knowledge of Theophrastus’ logical works, as his many references and quotations illustrate.⁵⁶ His exegesis is always detailed, full of insight and pertinent observations, though he will also present interpretations which we would nowadays not accept as close to Aristotle’s ideas. But such creative expansion of the Stagirite’s thought was already part and parcel of the Aristotelian tradition (and would continue long after Alexander in other schools of thought as well). For instance, when Alexander confirmed the view that the logical works are a tool (*organon*), not a branch of philosophy as the Stoics maintained, he took an important step, which influenced generations of philosophers up to the sixth century.

Notes

- 1 Definitions occur in *Prior Analytics* 1.1, 24b18–22; *Topika* 100a25–27; *Sophistic Refutations* 1, 64b27–165a2. A recent accessible discussion of Aristotle’s logic is Di Lascio 2014 who also discusses whether a *sullogismos* is a deduction (in the modern sense) or not. See also SHARPLES 96–100.
 - 2 Barnes 2007b, 547.
 - 3 That is, there is not one single work that presents his theory of knowledge but we can reconstruct it with the help of sections from his *Posterior Analytics*, *On the soul*, and *Metaphysics* (Barnes 2007a, 547). See also next note.
 - 4 I here follow SHARPLES whose section ‘Logic and Ontology’ comprises sources for discussions of the *Categories* (ch. 7–10), *On interpretation* (ch. 11), ‘Ontology: from and matter’ (ch. 12), ‘Logic’ (ch. 13), and ‘Theory of Knowledge’ (ch. 14).
 - 5 That Andronicus was the ‘architect’ of the *Organon* is argued by Barnes 2007a, 532.
 - 6 Our list is also not complete (Huby 2007, 5 n. 6).
 - 7 Barnes 2007a, 547.
- p.76
- 8 Their semantic similarity amounts to ‘saying one thing about another thing’.
 - 9 The so-called Question Approach was proposed by the British philosopher J.J. Ackrill 1963.
 - 10 Sedley 1999, 117.
 - 11 *Analytics* originates in the Greek *analuō*, which means ‘relax, dissolve, take apart’.
 - 12 Sharples 2010, ch. 7–9; Barnes 1985, 125–7.
 - 13 id. in *APr* 125, 30–1 (after Sharples 1987, 1196).
 - 14 Huby 2007.
 - 15 A similar judgement is found in the twelfth-century Byzantine scholar Theodorus Metochitus (fr. 70).
 - 16 For a discussion see Ackrill 1963. For Phaenias’ *Categories* see fr. 12 H-M.

- 17 Fuller discussion in Barnes 1985.
- 18 Main source for this information in DL 5. 42–44, 45, 47 (Theophrastus), 5.59–60 (Strato), but for several of the early members of the school we need to rely on later sources: Alexander *loc.cit.* (Eudemus), Philoponus in *Cat.* 7.20 (Phaenias fr. 12), Apuleius *De int.* 193.16 (Ariston of Alexandria).
- 19 Barnes 1985, 125, with reference to Alexander of Aphrodisias *Comm. on Apr* 1.44 (389,31–390,9). At pp. 126–7 he notes how some sources refer to ‘Aristotle and other associates’, while al-Farabi drops the addition and only mentions Aristotle.
- 20 For these examples and a fuller treatment see Smith 2015.
- 21 For further analysis see Baltussen 2015b.
- 22 Quoted in Barnes 2007a [Peripatetic logic], 535, who gives a more elaborate analysis of moods and figures, 536–46. For Aristo, see DL 7. 164.
- 23 Politis 2004 following Ross takes it to be both.
- 24 Guthrie 1981, 66n. with further literature.
- 25 In this section I paraphrase Shields 2016.
- 26 Shields 2016 based on Ackrill’s original argument (Ackrill 1972/3).
- 27 Theophrastus’ small work, found in a manuscript attached to Aristotle’s, was only identified as his because a scribal note at the end claims it as his.
- 28 Cf. Laks and Most 1993, xiv.
- 29 The final arrangement as we now have it is probably due to Andronicus’ editorial activity in the first century BCE. See Barnes 1999, and Hatzimichaeli 2013.
- 30 Regenbogen 1940, col. 1393.49 ff.; it was foreshadowed in Aristotle, e.g. *PA* 640a1–2, *EN* 1094b13–14, 1098a20 ff., *Top.* 162b8 (*kata ton oikeion methodon*). From the study of a few large fragments Huby (1985: 321) concluded ‘that Theophrastus wrote works intended to clear up puzzles by means of a detailed examination of cases, often giving different explanations for different cases. It is at least a working-hypothesis that other works were of the same kind’.
- 31 This view is confirmed in the medieval Arabic translation (Gutas 2010) and the *Metarsiology* (perhaps his work on cosmological phenomena listed in DL 5. 44 and preserved in an incomplete Arabic summary, see Daiber 1992). See also previous note (Huby 1985).
- 32 See Sharples 1998: 228 and n. 645. Baltussen 2015a.
- 33 On the intractable in nature according to Theophrastus, see also Vallance 1988.
- 34 See [Chapter 2](#), p. 38.
- 35 L&S vol. 1, 65 (highlighted by Sharples in his review *JHS* 1990, 200).
- 36 See Moraux 1969 for discussion of the technical details.
- 37 We have 1–5, and a paraphrase of 6–14 in Michael of Ephesus (twelfth century CE). See Sharples 1987. For the translation of the commentary, see Dooley 1989 (book 1), Dooley–Madigan 1992 (books 2–3), Madigan 1993 (book 4), Dooley 1993 (book 5).

- 38 Griffin’s new study *The Categories in the First Century BC* (2015).
- 39 For perceptive observations and further discussion see Griffin 2015, 32–5; 42 ff.
- 40 Griffin 2015, 57 ff. (cf. Barnes 2010a, 532–3). I here gloss Griffin’s ‘actuate’ (57) as ‘actualise’. As is clear from his translation of Boethius’ reading (Simplicius, *Comm. On Cat.*

- 159,10–15) the Greek verb is *anakeinein*, which originates in Plato's *Meno* 85C (64 with n. 107).
- 41 This requires cautious and speculative reconstruction for which I refer the reader to the meticulous analysis in Griffin's 2015.
- 42 Sharples 1999, 55. See Simplicius in *Cat.* 78.12; cf. Gottschalk 1987, 1109.
- 43 Scholars suspect that the anonymous commentary on the *Categories* in the Archimedes palimpsest may have been written by Porphyry (Chiaradonna et al. 2013).
- 44 See Mansfeld 1996, Baltussen 2000 (ch. 2).
- 45 Cf. Alexander, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaph.* = fr. 48 Stork. Numbers in Stork's draft edition, as of July 2015.
- 46 On the dialectical work see the useful (but slightly dated) collection edited by Owen 1968. On the relation between Plato and Aristotle regarding dialectical practice, see Baltussen 2008.
- 47 Adamson 2011 with previous literature.
- 48 Parry 2014.
- 49 Adamson 2011, 5, with reference to *APo* 1.1.
- 50 Barnes 2007b, 550–1; cf. 14F SHARPLES.
- 51 On the debate between Academics and Stoics see esp. Brittain 2001 and L&S 39A–40T.
- 52 Barnes 2007b, 551.
- 53 Ibid. 553–55.
- 54 Barnes prefers to see this passages as evidence for Sextus' interest in the theory of the *kritērion* (i.e., of judgment) rather than concept-formation (2007b, 552).
- 55 We know this partly because of his own internal cross-references, partly by references in later authors. See Sharples 1987 for a full list. Cf. Frede 2013.
- 56 The majority of cases in which Alexander mentions him is in the commentary on *APr.* (ca. 30 times), on the *Topics* (ca. seven), and on the *Meteorology* (ca. seven) [source: *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* TM online, accessed 12/3/16].

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Further reading

A useful set of papers on dialectic can be found in Owen 1968. For more detailed analysis of the logical fragments of Theophrastus, see Repici, *La Logica di Teofrasto* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1977) and Huby's commentary 2007 (see Appendix B). First century BCE Stoic criticisms of the *Categories* are analysed in Griffin 2015, 129–173. For Galen's use of logic see esp. Barnes 1991 and [Chapter 6](#), p. 137). The debate between the Stoics and Academics, esp. on the criterion of truth, receives a detailed analysis in G. Striker *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics* (Cambridge, 1996), 22–76 and 150–165. On Themistius see esp. Blumenthal 1979.

4 Ethics and politics

On morality and citizenship

Ethics or moral philosophy famously came of age when Socrates refocused philosophical enquiry, although many before him offered theoretical views on proper behaviour. The now canonical account is that both Plato and Aristotle held Socrates responsible for an ‘ethical turn’ when he turned away from natural philosophy: as Plato presents it, Socrates was disappointed in the kind of causality students of nature offered (*Phaedo* 98e–99a), and instead redirected his attention to the human soul (his famous ‘second sailing’, *Phaedo* 99d–102a). Aristotle gave a similar account (*Metaphysics* 1.3, 987b):

And when Socrates, disregarding the physical universe and confining his study to moral questions, sought in this sphere for the universal and was the first to concentrate upon definition, Plato followed him and assumed that the problem of definition is concerned not with any sensible thing but with entities of another kind.¹

While both reports may well contain some embellishment, there is little doubt that Socrates’ search for moral values determined the agenda for many generations of philosophers after him. Plato’s style of questioning owes much to Socrates, as the dialogues illustrate. Aristotle built on the foundations that both these pioneers laid down, and created connections with his other research into psychology, epistemology, and politics. The *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) is a kind of ‘prequel’ to the *Politics*: in aim and activity he considered individual and polis as complementary. In addition, as Barnes elegantly showed, Aristotle offers both ethical and meta-ethical judgements in his *NE*, that is, he offers ethical judgements about good and bad men and actions *as well as* judgements *about* such ethical judgements (hence *meta-ethical*).² Thus as a work that aims to assist us in achieving the highest good, it does so in concrete and abstract terms, by offering advice and at the same time reflecting on its value and meaning.

Did his successors follow in his footsteps? Yes and no. The continued emphasis on physics in the early Peripatos during the headship of Theophrastus (322–278 BCE) and especially Strato (278–65 BCE) was therefore an anomaly in the early Hellenistic period: with the rise of new philosophical movements, such as Cynicism (Diogenes of Synope, arriving in Athens ca. 340), Scepticism (Pyrrho, active 365–275 BCE), and Stoicism (founded by Zeno around 300 BCE), discussions shifted their focus to moral philosophy or applied ethics, with less emphasis on (meta)physics as the main focus of philosophical activity.³ Since many of these thinkers took Socrates as their leading light, this was hardly surprising. As a result physics was made secondary to ethics. Epicurus, who started teaching ca. 310 BCE, still offered a substantial theory on the physical world, but also contributed to the development of a moral theory of his own. It evoked criticism for its ‘hedonistic’ and ‘anti-social’ elements, but such labels have no firm basis in his philosophy regarding pleasure (*hêdonê*) and leading a private life (*lathe biôsas*). Misinterpretations of this kind were not uncommon, mostly originating with hostile outsiders or in one case, with a disgruntled student. Still, as we will see, the Peripatetics did not neglect ethics and also engaged with their contemporaries.

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New political realities in the post-Aristotelian era gave rise to new ideas. Philosophers raised new questions about human behaviour and social life: how does one become wise and remain unaffected by difficult times? Should a philosopher engage with society? Get married? Does God show an interest in us humans? Is our fate predetermined or can we influence our lives? Thus philosophy reclaimed a role as a practical perspective on life, instead of being a detached analysis of the world; practitioners did not abandon abstract categories and concepts, but also made an effort to offer society advice. How the Peripatetics initially dealt with this shift requires some interpretive effort: the surviving sources only give a limited picture. There is reason to believe that their ethical offerings were less attractive than rival schools such as Epicureans and Stoics—perhaps their ideas had less of a ‘salvation message’.⁴ A major bone of contention in Hellenistic ethics was the role of the so-called ‘external goods’, anything in terms of possessions that one might want to include in one’s happiness over and above virtue. Aristotle allowed for these (*EN* 1.8), while the Stoics, hardliners on the importance of virtue, denied they were of value. The central question of Hellenistic ethics would debate whether virtue was sufficient or not for a good life. Other points of disagreement between Peripatetics and Stoics will emerge when we consider their mutual responses on details (pleasure and distress, emotions).

We know that Peripatetics after Strato had an enduring interest in ethics, politics, and education. To what extent these new pursuits also follow

Aristotle's groundwork into fundamental questions on moral development, human nature, emotions, and practical wisdom we need to establish on a case by case basis.

The one question pervading the discourse in ethics was: 'how should we live our life?' Philosophers focused on the goal or purpose (*telos*) of life and shaped contemporary debates among Stoics and Epicureans: as a result questions of morality, fate, and emotional equilibrium moved centre stage. Some of their clever analogies illustrate the importance of ethics. The Stoics, for instance, compare philosophy to an animal or an egg: 'the shell is Logic, next comes the white, Ethics, and the yolk in the centre is Physics' (DL 7. 40). So while they present physics as the core, ethics plays the role of the nutritional layer, shored up by logic. The same passage offers an even clearer simile: 'philosophy is a field, with Logic being the encircling fence, Ethics the crop, and Physics the soil'. Their aim was to treat these areas as closely interconnected, but ethics and the life of a wise man were central to their enterprise and virtue the ultimate goal. Ethics should be a practical undertaking, in that their studies contribute to a way of life for the many, rather than just an intellectual game based on a set of theoretical hypotheses written down in book rolls for the few.

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The responsibilities of a citizen in the Hellenistic period did not change, but the obligations of civic life did. The shift towards autocratic rule in many city states, away from the democratic system, offered fewer opportunities for individuals to deliberate and participate in democratic processes. Sometimes philosophers had a role, for instance, as negotiators during conflicts between cities or, when Rome conquered Greece (second century BCE), between subject and ruling power. Such 'ambassadorial' roles were more a reflection of the supposed neutral position of philosophers than a sign of their intrinsic importance. But, as we will see shortly, such roles could serve them well to show off their rhetorical skills and advertise their philosophical ideas. The discussions among philosophers explored ethical questions, and often the interaction amongst the schools led to quarrels over points related to the very important questions, in particular the question how to define the good life.

Aristotle on ethics: reaction and innovation

In his magnificent *Nicomachean Ethics*, a large work that took up the challenge of describing how one might live well (*eudaimonein*), Aristotle was the first to offer a comprehensive and *systematic* account of ethics, partly in response to Plato. Plato initiated the first serious philosophical examination of ethical concepts, such as duty, courage, pleasure, or leadership, but also considered the

broader question of the good life in which pleasure and pain played a significant role, acknowledging their representational nature. He did not offer a systematic treatment of the moral questions (Evans 2007). His specific discussion of pleasure (*Philebus*) incorporated earlier theories, with reference to perception and affections (Warren 2007). He famously claimed that ‘the most natural concerns of human kind are pleasures, pains and desires’ (*Laws* 732e). The Greeks used this understanding of pain and pleasure to construct their notion of motivation. In other words, in analysing what to avoid and what to pursue they built up their understanding of moral choice. We know that Plato was concerned with the moral decline of Athens in the post-war period of the early fourth century, but rather than offer clear-cut positions, many of his dialogues invite the reader to explore moral concepts along with the characters and think about the problems for themselves. The many basic questions on virtue, such as courage, justice, and moderation considered in his early dialogues illustrate this. But the dialogic form, the ‘aporetic’ outcomes, and the multiple points of view generated different interpretations of the dialogues in the Hellenistic period. The lack of a clear doctrinal position would lead to either a sceptical or a dogmatic line of interpretation among his followers. Plato’s *Republic*, a masterpiece of political wishful thinking (describing an ‘ideal state’), outlined self-interest, rules of government, and many questions on education (mostly for the ruling class). He emphasised the importance of courage, moderation, justice, truthfulness, and wisdom (*Rep.* 383–89; 441–45), setting up a model of the main ‘good virtues’. Thus his political vision of the ideal state and its inhabitants would generate an enduring debate on the role of the people, centralised power and shared values and goods in organised society.

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Aristotle explored these issues further by making virtue of primary importance and asking a range of questions about behaviour and human action. In a way his aim (*EN* 1.1–3) reflects a view that the modern reader may find odd: happiness as a goal and how to achieve it (Pakula 2006). Theophrastus would later agree with him on the ‘highest good’ (*summum bonum*), but not on the happy life (Cic. *De fin.* 3. 6–7). Aristotle’s definition of moral virtue included the emotions, which he did not want to eliminate, but use to drive actions. Thus he continued the same style of analysis as Plato but restructured the way in which the emotions should play a role. He held that excess and deficiency destroyed moral qualities (*EN* 2.2) and famously set out his view of the ‘middle’: the ‘mean’ would lie between excess and deficiency.⁵ Thus he acknowledged that anger could be useful (e.g. to fight or drive revenge for wrongdoing), but also invoked a principle of moderation ‘relative to us’ (*EN* 2. 7).

After his extensive empirical research into constitutions (DL 5. 27) Aristotle

wrote several works in which he explored topics such as human nature, education, the basis of ethical knowledge, and in several respects came to different conclusions from Plato's. While sharing the belief that political activity can be rational and that virtue and community (*koinônia*) are crucial in some way, his recommendation for the preferred political system is a mixed one. Within his treatment he focuses on the relationship between ruler and the ruled.⁶ He also held the view that in ethics especially 'respectable views' (*endoxa*) played a major role: established views could be analysed and their acceptance recorded, and form the basis for further reasoning. He strongly believed that disagreement created a need for resolving the matter: 'to lend oneself equally to the opinions and the fancies of disputing parties is foolish; for clearly one of them must be mistaken' (*Metaph.* 11, 1062b31–2).

Starting from several core notions (let's call them moral principles), Aristotle's analysis of virtue includes his views on emotions, character, and well-being. This focus on emotions (*pathê*) and moral character (*êthos*, 'manner', 'disposition') culminates in outlining the ideal of *eudaimonia*, 'thriving' or 'well-being', in *NE* 10.⁷ The methodological principles he formulated in his ethical works are strikingly original. He considers existing practices and beliefs important, and is keen to extract any useful ideas from them. He insists that 'thriving' occurs in a balanced community; moral rules are based on communal agreement and determined by both tradition and convention as well as rational thought. His core idea that a human being is essentially a 'social creature' (which is one way to translate his famous phrase *zôion politikon*, *Pol.* 1.2) determined his focus on the city state, since the term *politikos* implies that human beings congregate in communities, which in classical and Hellenistic Greece meant the *polis*.⁸ Note, however, that in his *Politics*, a work closely connected to *EN*, he normally speaks of 'political science' (*politikê epistêmê*, *Pol.* 1.1), not political speculation. Here 'science' stands for a discipline with secure knowledge. In general, he would distinguish between three kinds of 'science': contemplative (concerned with truth for its own sake: metaphysics and physics), productive (makes useful or beautiful things: poetry, rhetoric), or practical (politics).

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As to behaviour, he believed that good habits will lead to good behaviour (*EN* 2.6, 1107a). In his view, then, the virtues arise from doing the right things on a regular basis. In addition, he proposed a theory which we now know as the 'theory of the mean' (2.6), a notion which he defines 'in relation to us'. If, for example, we were to consider two pounds of meat and ten pounds of meat, the mean 'relative to us' is not necessarily six pounds of meat (even if six is the natural middle between two and ten).⁹

Moreover, Aristotle's overall aim, the greatest good, is called *eudaimonia*, a term often translated as 'happiness'. Most translators also agree that this translation will not do: the Greek *eudaimonia* is much richer and requires a 'thick' description to explicate its fuller meaning: 'blessedness', 'thriving', 'having reached its *telos* and continuing to fulfill its purpose', and one could go on. It is important to be clear about its status: it stands for the ultimate aim (*summum bonum*), as distinct from other purposeful actions which may contribute to reaching it. The Greek term has led to a neologism to describe Aristotle's ethical position: eudaimonism. Its fuller definition Aristotle gave in *EN* 10, where he ends up equating it to a form of contemplation (10.7).

In *EN* 6 Aristotle studies decision-making and the intellectual qualities ('virtues') required for this process. He distinguishes five modes of thought which our mind uses to reach the truth: technical skill (*technê*), prudence (*phronêsis*), intuition (*nous*), wisdom (*sophia*), understanding (*sunesis*). His analysis of these modes or states of the mind leads him to focus on the last one, with the aim to clarify how we have knowledge of universal and necessary things, and how the foundations of that knowledge cannot be demonstrated (*EN* 6. 6), a position in tune with *APo* 2. 19.

Like Plato, Aristotle gave pleasure and pain serious consideration. At *NE* 1. 13, 1103a1–10 he introduces pleasure in connection with intellectual skills (a virtuous person takes pleasure in exercising these), and elaborates on the constraints of pleasure in the pursuit of other things (compare 1153a7–17 'an unimpeded activity of a natural state'). There is no one treatise in which Plato explained his ideas and integrated them with epistemology and perception, something Aristotle achieved in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (importantly in books 1, 6, and 10—on which more in a moment). Aristotle's strong emphasis on an integrated and coherent set of principles which could guide the behaviour of Greek citizens actually came out of a strongly empirical approach. The emphasis is on habituation (*hexis*) as an important constitutive factor in human behaviour. ¹⁰

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Aristotelian Ethics after Aristotle

Early Peripatetics pursued a much narrower agenda and not always one that stayed loyal to the master's ideas. Cicero had a few things to say about the doctrinal loyalty of later Peripatetics. As we saw ([Chapter 1](#)), he declared Hieronymus of Rhodes not worthy of the label 'Peripatetic', because of his focus on pleasure in ethics. But according to him there were others who did not stick to the straight and narrow in their views: Theophrastus is chided over

his stance on bodily and external goods. Supposedly Theophrastus held the view that happiness is destroyed if one loses these.¹¹ At *Tusc.* 5. 24–5, 85 Cicero describes him as taking a firm position in praising virtue alone, but in *De fin.* 5. 12 Cicero has Piso reproach Theophrastus for allowing too much influence of fortune, inferring that ‘If that were right, wisdom could not provide a happy life’.¹² Clearly these three factors—happiness, external goods, fate—were key points of orientation in the Hellenistic ethical discourse. It is also clear that in the passage quoted Piso takes Theophrastus to deviate from Aristotle.¹³ The opposite position, Antiochus’ project, is presented as a far more ambitious and unusual one: to create a synthesis between Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. Hence it is interesting that he differentiates between the two first scholars, especially since scholars have often expressed the suspicion that syncretism is usually made possible as a result of misinterpretation of (one of) the component theories, which would include glossing over subtle distinctions. Annas (1990) has however offered a different line of argument, in which she takes ‘eclecticism’ and ‘syncretism’ as approaches which may miss the point, because in certain cases (she is thinking of Arius Didymus) we may consider exploring ‘the idea that it is not just a combination of Stoic and Peripatetic ideas, but a critical, and arguably intelligent, reinterpretation of Aristotle’ (81). In making her case she focuses on the (under-explored) question why Arius should want to use Stoic terms to explain Aristotle. Her intriguing suggestion is that the Peripatetics themselves may have used Stoic terms to show that a Stoic theory of, say, *orexis* ‘desire’ resembles, and can be replaced with, the Stoic *hormê* ‘impulse’ in order to show that one could arrive at an Aristotelian conclusion (81). Thus under pressure of the competing theory, the Aristotelian might have turned the tables on the Stoics and forced them to reconsider their own position, giving the advantage in the debate to the Peripatetics.

It is of considerable interest that early Peripatetics also studied Plato’s works, writing summaries of, and responses to, philosophical views outside their own circle. It shows how the discourse on ethics was interactive and competitive. Karamanolis has argued persuasively that they saw Aristotle’s work as a continuation of Plato’s. We know that the *Republic* was quite popular, since Theophrastus (*DL* 5. 43), possibly Eudemus (fr. 18., under 3d Stork ‘Astronomies’), Dicaearchus (fr. 88), and Clearchus (Athen. ix. 393a = fr. 3 W.) studied it.¹⁴ Later Peripatetics took their distance from Plato, and ‘Antiochus (*Acad.* 1. 33–4; *De fin.* 5. 12–14) and Plutarch (*Against Colotes* 1115a–b) distinguish sharply between Aristotle and later Peripatetics’.¹⁵ If only we knew more about these discussions to assess properly how they responded to the work.

347e–f), in line with the interest Aristotle (*EN* 10. 4) and others had shown in the subject (*DL* 5. 22).¹⁶ There is in fact some uncertainty in the sources as to whether the work is by Theophrastus or Chamaeleon, but it does not matter for our purposes (they are contemporaries and identical titles often created confusion over authorship). The work discussed pleasure in literary achievement, those who pursued the ‘good life’ by way of luxurious goods and services. In a work *On Drunkenness* Chamaeleon elaborates on the lavish consumption of wine, which he considered a recently acquired habit because of imported large wine cups (the long quotation in fr. 10 = Athen. *Deipn.* 461a–d).

Subsequent Peripatetics seem to have limited themselves to individual problems and practical applications. This is at least what the evidence suggests. Titles of their works indicate engagement with questions of education and moral principles, while their involvement in politics hints at their pragmatic outlook. We should avoid over-confident statements, as the evidence is very incomplete, mostly based on the lists in Diogenes Laertius (5. 42–50; 59–61; 80–1; 86–8), details found in a range of authors, and summary accounts in Arius Didymus (ca. 50 BCE) and Stobaeus (ca. 450 CE).

Common themes

Given Aristotle’s thorough studies into the foundations and applications of moral principles, the importance of virtue and the means to achieve it, it should not surprise us that the works of his immediate followers intended to work out details and illustrate their importance. But they must also have reacted to their rivals outside the school when ethical debates focused on classifying virtue from rational (Stoics) or applied (Epicureans) principles. We find Peripatetic scholars deal especially with three areas (character, emotions, and political rule) and offer particular views, which regularly exhibit a striking resemblance to the terminology and concepts used in other schools. It will be important to establish whether this ‘linguistic contamination’ of the contemporary discourse is superficial (due to participation in the debate) or goes deeper (a mutual influence esp. in reacting to the Stoics). The available evidence allows us to reconstruct some points of interest and continuing concerns for Theophrastus, Lyco, Demetrius, Dicaearchus, and Aspasius. I will discuss each of them in the following pages with the qualification that one cannot avoid some speculative reconstructions.

On character Theophrastus was the stand out in approach and style of presentation. Although few modern assessments would easily agree with Libanius’ verdict that Theophrastus ‘enjoyed a brilliant reputation in philosophy’, his treatment of character probably contributed considerably.¹⁷ One reason for his success may lie in his approach; it is an ingeniously different

method in describing character. We do not find evidence for engagement with character in further theoretical treatises (DL 5). But he developed his famous character sketches (*Éthikoi Kharakteres*) in a literary style, possibly as a pedagogical move. They are amusing psychological *vignettes* which scholars generally believe have a close link to contemporary comedy (the famous playwright Menander studied with him). The sketches depict men with a serious personality flaw in an amusing and lively way. The Greek word *kharakter* means literally ‘stamp (on coins)’, ‘impression (from a branding iron)’, and hence a ‘distinctive mark’ or ‘characteristic’. Thus Theophrastus describes the loquaciousness of the chatterbox, the overreaching grasp of an ambitious man, and the annoying behaviour of the oaf, the snob, the gossip, and so on. A particularly nice example of such a character sketch is his depiction of the malcontent or griper (*ho mempsimoiros*):

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The griper is a type such as this, who, when his friend has sent him a part of the meat from a sacrifice, will say to the delivery boy, ‘You grudged me my soup and my poor wine by not inviting me to dinner.’ When he is being kissed by his mistress, he says ‘I wonder whether you really love me that much in your heart’. He will be annoyed with Zeus, not for not raining, but for raining too late; and, if he finds a purse on the road, ‘Ah,’ he will say, ‘but I have never found a treasure!’.

[*Char.* 15. 1–5, trans. J. Rusten (Loeb)]

This example, reminding us of someone who always sees the glass as half empty, illustrates well the lively and life-like depiction of these sketches, which must have found a welcome audience. Theophrastus’ sense of humour also transpires in a short anecdote preserved in a late source. Encountering a frivolous babblers (also described in *Char.* 3 and 7), he is supposed to have said: ‘Tomorrow, where will it be possible *not* to see you?’ (fr. 452 FHSG). Still, his sense of propriety never left him, since he also stated that jokes must be such that ‘the listener is delighted and the speaker not ashamed’ (fr. 453). These represent views in alignment with Aristotle’s position that it is the social virtues of amiability, sincerity, and wit that make for pleasant and engaging interaction with others (*EN* 2.7, 1108a10–30; cf. 4.7). Given Theophrastus’ popularity (DL 5. 37 reports 2,000 students in his audience—which may be a grand total rather than the number on any given day), it is quite possible that he presented them in a way worthy of the theatre: like many good teachers, he most likely also was a performer.

Scholars have suggested that the character sketches may have a more serious aim, namely to illustrate Aristotle’s idea of character type (*êthos*) with reference to the analysis in *Nicomachean Ethics* book 2, which contains the crucial discussion of habits and virtues.¹⁸ Combined with Aristotle’s doctrine of the

mean—a middle position between a virtue and a vice (*EN* 2.9)—the lively sketches of flawed characters may function as concrete examples of extremes, which Aristotle had described in more abstract terms. Compare for instance Aristotle’s description of one of the ‘excellences’ (*aretai*) of character, such as courage, which he defines as ‘a mean with respect to things that inspire confidence or fear, . . . and it chooses or endures things because it is noble to do so, or because it is base not to do so’ (1116a10–12). Clearly this is a more academic style of discourse, trying to articulate precisely what something is in relation to previously stated criteria (the extremes of confidence and fear). Theophrastus’ *vignette* of the coward (*Char.* 25) starts with defining cowardice as the ‘fearful yielding of the soul’ and then proceeds to give examples of cowardly behaviour (a coward is overly concerned, offers excuses to evade battle, even lies about heroic deeds he did not do). This kind of approach aims to *illustrate* the abstract concept with *concrete* examples, the perfect method to inform a wider audience.

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If this is the correct way to interpret these sketches, they are good evidence for Theophrastus’ lively teaching style and his attempt to show that to some audiences concrete illustration may be more effective than theoretical analysis. Other fragments may support such a connection.¹⁹ Yet we should note that Theophrastus also deviates from Aristotle: the sketches focus on flaws and he clearly chose to present his moral instruction in a humorous fashion.

The *Characters* were hugely influential because of their style and literary value. The Peripatetic Satyrus wrote a work *Peri Charaktêrôn* (fr. 27 Schorn), for which we have one fragment preserved in Athenaeus that deals with the type of the profligate (*asôtos*). But they also echo through the ages. For instance, in the third century we find a striking interest in personality traits in line with the characters of Theophrastus and Peripatetic doctrine in a text of Aristo (fr. 20 Sharples, from Philodemus *On Vices* 2), which offers a definitional statement on being ‘overly fond of praise’ (*philepainos*) and a ‘person who loves to please’, while later in the text (columns 6 and 7) ‘Theophrastus *Character* 5 is quoted *verbatim* . . .’.²⁰ Subsequent centuries also reveal traces of the work. The philosopher Seneca (first century CE) offers a glimpse of the text’s survival, when in *De benef.* VI. 9 he reproduces a literal translation of *Char.* 15, 6.²¹ The satirist Lucian (second century CE) may have known the Theophrastean *Characters*, as suggested by a number of echoes in phrasing close to *Char.* 2, 4 and others. While these are allusions with no author’s name attached to them, several authors of the second century CE refer to Theophrastus explicitly, such as Fronto, Marcus Aurelius, and Aulus Gellius. In what way he was studied is not entirely clear from these passages, but Baldwin’s suggestion that he was used as rhetorical model is very plausible.²²

The character traits also raise questions regarding personality and the role of emotions. Aristotle discussed emotions mostly in context of ethical or moral behaviour resulting from human interaction. ‘Emotion’ can here include sensation or sentiment as well as mental states, which is why we find some of the central claims on the topic in his works on rhetoric and ethics. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle discusses emotions connected to persuasion and how an audience can be swayed by influencing the head or the heart, while in the context of *Nicomachean Ethics* he attempts to give an analysis of character and behaviour.²³ Both works focus on how we are affected by speech and interaction with other humans, asking how we can deal with anger and fear, and how belief and thinking play a role in the process. Scholars have argued that Aristotle responded to Platonic discussions, but he also contributes new ideas, introducing innovations to the subject’s analysis and direction.²⁴

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A considerable number of extant fragments in Theophrastus are concerned with emotions (*pathê*, ‘affections’). The fragments cover topics such as emotions, virtue and vice, happiness, the wise man, fortune, justice, friendship, and pleasure.²⁵ Among the surviving passages from his works, those on ethics are among the most numerous (discussed in Fortenbaugh 2011, 245–97). The source authors are mostly late (Seneca and after) and have a specific interest in ethical texts, including gnomic expressions. As discussed in [Chapter 1](#), Theophrastus mostly directed his energy towards topics which Aristotle did not cover exhaustively or which, in his mind, needed refinement or adjustments. Topics like pleasure and pain take up considerable space in his work.

To integrate pleasure and pain into ethical thought had been an Aristotelian innovation (Frede 2006). He discussed it in several places, but in particular in *EN* 10.1–5, a long discussion which opens with the following statement (10. 1, 1172a19–27):

After these matters we ought perhaps next to discuss pleasure. For it is thought to be most intimately connected with our human nature, which is the reason why in educating the young we steer them by the rudders of pleasure and pain; it is thought, too, that to enjoy the things we ought and to hate the things we ought has the greatest bearing on excellence of character. . . . since men choose what is pleasant and avoid what is painful; and such things, it will be thought, we should least of all omit to discuss, especially since they admit of much dispute.

(trans. Barnes)

Here Aristotle gives a clear justification for including the treatment of pleasure and pain (they are connected to human nature), while he also indicates that it is not a straightforward subject, since there is considerable disagreement about them. He next adds some methodological observations of broader application,

noting how ‘feelings and actions are less reliable than facts’ (1172a35–6), and how a clash between feelings and the ‘facts’ may lead to problems; in his words, ‘when they clash with the facts of perception, they are despised’ (a36–7). The important first section of book 10 closes with a significant conclusion on the basis of these considerations:

True arguments seem, then, most useful not only with a view to knowledge, but with a view to life also; for since they harmonize with the facts they are believed, and so they stimulate those who understand them to live according to them.

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This widening perspective is of interest, not least because it intimates real-life application for the kind of knowledge acquired with the help of valid arguments. Aristotle elucidates the link between knowledge and morality in *EN* book 6. And given that we access knowledge via the senses and process it with our minds, the discussion also involved the soul. Aristotle thus has a lot to say about the emotions, psychology, epistemology, and morality within the context of his ethical writings. His ideas seem to build partly on Plato’s, who had discussed pleasure in his dialogue *Philebus*, in which pleasure is placed in opposition to wisdom in order to establish which of the two is more important.²⁶ The discussion, in which Socrates prefers wisdom over pleasure, outlines types of pleasure (pure, mixed), and discusses pleasure in terms of limit, unlimited, and lack, concluding that there are three states: pleasure, pain, and neutral.

Theophrastus is reported to have claimed that the soul’s stay in the body is fraught with difficulties, because ‘for a short period of time’ it pays a high price for having to deal with emotions such as grief, fear, and desire (fr. 440A FHSG²⁷). This comment presupposes a dualistic notion (body and soul), while also implying a disembodied stage for the soul, in which it is freed from bodily strains such as emotions. One wonders if this is connected to Aristotle’s comment that the rational soul or *nous* comes from outside (*Generation of Animals* 736b27–28), a notion he also alluded to in *De an.* 3.5, when he implies that the soul is partially separable (a problematic passage).

Interestingly, Theophrastus attempted to analyse the effect that pleasure and pain had, when we make a mistake, but our source (fr. 441 FHSG = Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 2. 10) does not allow us to decide whether this is a puzzle about motivation or voluntary action. In Aristotle this issue is linked to praise and blame (*EN* 3.1, 1109b30–32). Theophrastus’ comments on envy show him to be an acute observer of human nature in the following two passages:

envious men are more unfortunate than other men to the extent that the latter are pained by their own mishaps, while the former, who feel envy, are in continuous distress not only

at their own troubles, but also at the successes of other men.

(fr. 443 FHSG = Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.38.43; trans. slightly modified)

Theophrastus said that wicked men are not so pleased with their own good things as with the evils afflicting others.

(fr. 444 FHSG = Stobaeus, *Anthology* 3.38.30)

Thus he describes envy as an affliction which creates ‘continuous distress’, since people grumble about their own troubles as much as they do about the good fortune of others (they always perceive a lose–lose situation). But he certainly adopted the model of the mean–disposition (fr. 449A FHSG), when he reviews the different dispositions Aristotle discussed in *EN* books 2–5.

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In general outlook, Theophrastus was cautious in his evaluation of Aristotle’s views, but his legacy in ethics seems limited. Cicero thought that he could characterise him in a quick description, by contrasting him with Dicaearchus, for whom he expresses great admiration on several occasions (e.g. *Att.* 2.12 = Dicaearchus fr. 8). In a letter to Atticus (*Att.* 2. 16; April 29, 59 BCE) Cicero wrote:

As things are, in view of the dispute between your friend Dicaearchus and my friend Theophrastus—the former recommending the life of action, the latter the life of contemplation—I think I have already obeyed both. For as to Dicaearchus, I think I have satisfied his requirements; at present my eyes are fixed on the school which not only allows of my abstaining from business, but blames me for not having always done so. Wherefore let me throw myself, my dear Titus, into those noble studies, and let me at length return to what I ought never to have left.

Here, as so often with Cicero, the comment is also about himself, showing his knowledge of these philosophers, their views, and placing himself in a relationship to both of them, and whose requirements he claims to fulfil. But the pithy summary of the two stances also indicates that positions in the Peripatos were not completely unified, if we can trust Cicero on this point.²⁸ Ironically, Aulus Gellius, who in his *Attic Nights* compared the two thinkers on the topic of friendship and individual needs, comments that Theophrastus ‘expressed himself with greater thoroughness on this matter and greater precision and accuracy than Cicero’ (*NA* 1.21 = fr. 534.39–40 FHSG).

Peripatetic ethics after Theophrastus

While Theophrastus and Strato tackled conventional topics (kingship, justice, modes of life and happiness; titles survive in *DL* 5. 59), broader themes were

covered in subsequent generations, especially on politics and law. Oddly for Strato's successor, Lyco, direct evidence on such topics is slender, which is surprising given his fame and long tenure as the head of the Peripatos. He did write on education (see below).

Indirectly we know of several other Peripatetics actively involved in ethics and politics, in particular Lyco, Demetrius, and Dicaearchus. As noted in [Chapter 2](#), Strato did not write much on topics in ethics or politics—or, if he did, little has survived.²⁹ His close associate Chamaeleon wrote an *Exhortation to philosophy* (fr. 4–6 MM and M) in which he apparently linked music and morality by endorsing the view that music influenced character and could regulate emotions (fr. 5 = Athenaeus 14.18). He reported that the Pythagorean Cleinias would play the lyre when angry, and thus allowed for music to assist in *psychagogia*, as Philodemus confirms (fr. 6 = Philod. *On music* 4; cf. fr. 7).

Lyco was preoccupied with education as becomes clear from descriptions of his writings (fr. 2–3 SFOD). Reports confirm his efforts to educate young boys and the good advice he gave his fellow citizens (DL 5. 66). His eloquence clearly served him well (DL 5. 65 = fr. 1). He seems to have been especially interested in discussing the goal of life (*telos*), equally important among contemporary Stoics (but we may perhaps compare Strato fr. 83 Sharples = fr. 134 W). He defined the *telos* as ‘the true joy of the soul . . . based upon what is honourable’ (Clement of Alexandria, *Patchwork* 2.21.129 = fr. 10), which provides us with evidence for his eudaimonist leanings, but one infused with ‘moral fibre’ and more internalised. Lyco also considered the problem of (mental) distress, but from a different angle: when asked what caused pain for good people, he replied ‘a wicked man enjoying good fortune’ (fr. *17 Stork). Clearly he was more concerned about *Schadenfreude*, the reaction of glee about other people's misfortune (see texts quoted above for Theophrastus, p. 90). Two inscriptions which refer to him inform us about his social role: the first shows that he was politically active and contributed to the military fund in 243 BCE (fr. 5 Stork³⁰); the second mentions that he was awarded a crown due to his good will towards the god in Delphi: this entailed that he would be given ‘precedence in seating in all contests’ (*proedria*) and ‘exemption from tax’ (*ateleia*). Such honours are a clear indication of how highly regarded he was in Greek society. We should not forget, however, that there were persistent rumours about his predilection for enjoying parties a bit too much (fr. 8 White), and it is with this in mind that we may view his sketch of a drunkard preserved in a Latin source of Augustus' age (fr. 12).

Hieronymus of Rhodes, a contemporary of Lyco and (according to some accounts) his successor and ‘enemy’ during their lifetime (see also [Chapter 5](#)),

wrote on ethics, and the evidence preserved in Cicero, Philodemus, Plutarch, Athenaeus, and Stobaeus hints at a variety of interests (fr. 11–36, but no title survives). Hieronymus seems to subscribe to Aristotle’s analysis of anger as a mixture of pain and desire. In a passage from a work *On Anger* (fr. 25 = Plut. *On Controlling Anger* 4, 454E–F) he discusses the onset of anger and uses the analogy of a flame ‘igniting in a rabbit fur’. In fr. 26, from the same work of Plutarch, he is said to have used a medical analogy when discussing how to deal with anger: ‘calming the swelling also alleviates the fever, as Hieronymus says’.³¹ The use of medical analogies was quite common in philosophy, going back to at least Plato. This image is nonetheless of interest in considering where he stands in relation to Aristotle on the question of anger. In *Rhet.* 2.2 Aristotle had defined anger as ‘an impulse accompanied by pain, to a revenge for a clear insult towards oneself or one’s friends’ (the description in *De anima* refers to boiling of the blood or warm substance around the heart, not the spleen). A further comment in Seneca (fr. 27) confirms Hieronymus’ belief that anger causes people to hurt *themselves*.

In another important fragment, reported by Cicero, he is said to make the absence of pain the greatest good (*summum bonum*, fr. 11 White). But Cicero finds this report enough reason to doubt his allegiance to the school’s doctrines:

Now why I should call him a Peripatetic I do not know, since he identified the greatest good with absence of pain, and whoever disagrees about the greatest good disagrees about the whole philosophical system.³²

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Presumably, on a rather uncharitable reading of this position, Hieronymus could be mistaken for one of the Epicureans, as if he placed pleasure above all else (it is of course crucial to ask after the exact nature of this notion, but in *De fin.* Cicero displays a distinctive dislike for Epicurean philosophy³³). But we should probably not follow Cicero in his judgment in that such an easy and convenient argument from analogy suits his polemical purpose. In other contexts, Hieronymus was explicitly compared to Epicurus.³⁴

Typical for the kind of meagre evidence we can obtain for this period is the papyrus among the literary fragments for Hieronymus (*POxy* 3656, t. 52 p. 49 Parsons = fr. 55 White). In a very incomplete brief text an unknown author reports that several writers (including Hieronymus in a work entitled *On Constraint*) wrote about a female philosopher in Plato’s school under Speusippus; another author of interest to us mentioned here is Aristophanes the Peripatetic who ‘reported likewise in *On Painlessness* in her teens she was lovely and full of unstudied grace . . .’ (trans. White).³⁵ The crucial detail here

is of course the work of this Aristophanes: if the title is correct (*On Painlessness – peri alupias*), it is a very intriguing snippet of information on the topic of pain, and presumably an analysis of how one might avoid it.³⁶

Dicaearchus is another early follower of Aristotle who engaged in moral enquiry, but with a focus on psychology (see [Chapter 2](#)) and politics (his other focus was cultural history and biography). It is thought that he was special advisor to King Ptolemy in Egypt, but the actual evidence for this is slim (he did do some work for a king, but which one is not certain). His works include studies of the constitutions of several cities (Sparta, Pellene, Corinth, Athens: fr. 13a–d, mentioned in Cicero's *Letters to Atticus* 2.2.2 = fr. 9). His contributions pertain to comments on the Spartan conventions of shared dinners in the *Tripolitikos* (fr. 87 = Cic. *On Law* 3. 14) and a possible critique of Plato's *Republic* (fr. 88). This last work fits a pattern of keen interest in Plato's ideas among early Peripatetics, especially the *Republic* (above, p. 85–6).

The next Peripatetic we hear about is Demetrius, an active politician, representing a more practical side of the school: he held actual power at Athens for ten years (317–307 BCE). Cicero declared him the philosopher-king Plato had dreamed about.³⁷ He wrote on law, constitutions, statesmanship, and his own role as leader of Athens (DL 5. 81–2). He ruled with a mandate from the Macedonian king, until he got chased out in 308/7 BCE by his namesake Demetrius (son of Antigonus, later nicknamed *Poliorketês* = 'taker of cities').³⁸ One report attributes this to envy (DL 5. 76). He introduced some legislation, writing at least four books on the matter (DL 5. 75–85), one of which dealt with curbing excesses in funerary practices (fr. 53 F&S = fr. 135 W.).³⁹ To what extent these activities are philosophical (or even Peripatetic) in nature is hard to say, but it is possible that he followed the trend of wanting more detailed laws, as found, for instance, in Plato's *Laws*, or more subtle criteria, as seems the case in Theophrastus' *On Contracts* (fr. 650 FHSG).⁴⁰ He was so successful that many statues were set up for him, but, as so often happens when the political winds change, these were taken down again later (fr. 19 SOD). Apparently he remained quite sanguine about it: DL 5. 82 reports that upon hearing the statues destroyed, Demetrius said 'That they may do, but the merits which caused them to be erected they cannot destroy'.

We are poorly informed about the views of Critolaus, who was one of the three philosophers in the Athenian embassy to Rome in 155 BCE, but he seems to have made a few additions to Aristotle's ethics. Cicero informs us (*Tusc. Disp.* 5. 17 = fr. 21 W.) that he thought the goods of the mind outweighed the goods of the body and other external advantages, 'so far that they would require the whole earth and sea to equalise the scale'.⁴¹ Apparently, in the

debate on the value of external goods Critolaus came down on the side of the mind. Cicero even compares him to the Platonist Xenocrates, ‘gravest of philosophers, who raises virtue so high, and who lessens and depreciates everything else’. Critolaus here deviated from Aristotle, while he was more orthodox in other areas, for instance, in defending the eternity of the world against the Stoics (fr. 13 W.).

Beyond the Hellenistic period: 100 BCE–100 CE

Our information for the first century BCE and the first century CE is especially thin when it comes to ethical and political views of the Peripatetics. There are two reasons for this gap in our knowledge: either sources have been lost or what we have only concerns other areas of philosophy (physics, metaphysics, logic, which we considered in Chapters 2–3).

The revival of Aristotelian studies in the first century BCE was, as we saw ([Chapter 1](#)), closely related to the transport of the library of the Peripatos to Rome (p. 17). In this period the elucidation of the difficult treatises took precedence over other types of engagement with Aristotelian ideas. Those who were philosophically inclined began to write comments on both Plato and Aristotle and soon the fuller commentaries came into being. This ‘genre’ evolved slowly, combining skills arising from literary criticism and philosophical discourse, and was both scholarly and exegetical.⁴² Several individuals stand out here amongst those who wrote commentaries on individual works of Aristotle: Adrastus, Aspasius (whose only extant commentary is on ethics), and Alexander of Aphrodisias (who wrote his own treatises and commented on logic, physics, perception, and metaphysics).

Under Augustus we find a summary account of Peripatetic ethics in the work of Arius (or Areius) Didymus, a Stoic philosopher, preserved in the late summaries of Stobaeus (the so-called ‘Doxographies A, B and C’).⁴³ Summaries had become more popular in the Hellenistic period for teaching purposes. Arius presents us with a report of Aristotelian doctrines, but his perspective is coloured by an attempt to bring these views closer to Stoic views by emphasising similarities between the two schools (much like the Platonist Antiochus, school leader 110–68 BCE, had done in his ethical theory, or the Peripatetic Critolaus). The work was used by Stobaeus in the fifth century when he composed his collection of sayings with ethical advice for his son.⁴⁴ Thus scholars think that Stobaeus used Arius as his source in ch. 2. 7, a long exposition (Wachsmuth 1884–1923, 37–152) of Stoic and Peripatetic ethics.

In the second century CE Aspasius (ca. 150 CE) wrote commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, *De sensu*, *De caelo*, the *Categories*, and *On Interpretation*. The evidence for these works suggests that they were extensive and detailed, often a line-by-line interpretation. In some instances our knowledge of their existence depends on one passage only, but the evidence that he authored these seven works is reasonably firm.⁴⁵ Aspasius' interest in Aristotle's ethics fits the Hellenistic tradition, in which debate focused on moral perfection and the means to reach this goal, and signals the shift away from the school's early focus on physics. His work was known to and used by Galen, Alexander, Boethius, and Simplicius.

Aspasius' *Commentary on the Ethics* was probably written in the early second century CE. One possible contemporary reference that might secure this date is his mention of the temple of Zeus, a grand project revisited by Hadrian and 'in the news' in 124/5 CE. Aspasius mentions it as an example of 'magnificence' (*Comm. on Aristotle's EN* 106,5–6). This would give us a date of ca. 130–1 CE for the work.⁴⁶

Of his commentary on ethics we still have books 1, 2, 4, 7, 8. Aspasius discusses standard questions regarding fate, choice, and the virtues. For instance, he claims that each human being is the 'source and cause of the things he does' (74,10–15). Virtue and vice both depend on us (76,11–16), but he denies that they admit of degrees, claiming that 'the perfect virtue consists of all virtues, both the practical and the theoretical' (*Comm. on EN* 8,25–6).⁴⁷ Aspasius also commented on the love between parents and children (*ibid.* 177,31–3) and showed awareness that children *should* love their parents more than parents their children, because in that case, so he reasoned, the object of love (parent) is of more value. When he added 'this does not happen', he sounded a critical note, aware that this might contradict comments elsewhere, but he stopped short of pressing Aristotle any further on this point.⁴⁸ It seems clear that he was reluctant to expose the school founder's doctrine on every detail. The commentator has a duty to clarify, but when he detects inconsistencies, he should tread carefully to avoid undermining his own enterprise. It would seem that, by this time, orthodoxy was becoming a serious issue and consistency in doctrine a more pressing matter.

Regarding the study of 'emotions' (*pathê*) Aspasius offers the following intriguing observation in one of his commentaries on Aristotle's ethics (*Commentary on Aristotle's Ethics* 44.20–1 = 16U SHARPLES [p. 140]):

we do not find a definition of emotion in any of the early Peripatetics, but of the more recent ones Andronicus said that emotion is an irrational movement of the soul on account of the supposition of [something] bad or good, taking 'irrational' not as 'opposed to reason', as the Stoics [do], but as a movement in the irrational part of the soul.

From this remark it would seem clear that Aspasius had very little to work with by the early second century CE, since *we* know that Theophrastus and others discussed emotions (above p. 89). This comment also highlights an important contrast with the Stoics, who had made the soul purely rational. So it is fair to ask: is this further evidence that between Aristotle's death (322 BCE) and 100 CE the works of Aristotle and his successors were not available? Like the other areas of research, ethics apparently did not fare much better during this period. Access to many of Aristotle's works may have been problematic and our evidence for the Peripatetics is again fragmentary. Apart from a gap between 150 BCE and 150 CE, we possess textual evidence for the engagement with ethical topics by the first four or five scholars.

One major issue in his ethical writings Aristotle left for later generations to fight over is the claim that external goods have value for happiness (*EN* 1.8). While he discussed this point in the context of commonly accepted beliefs, and refers back to the definition of goods as threefold (external, of the soul, of the body), the position he hereby entertained made him the target of the Stoics who were hardliners when it comes to virtue: virtue alone guaranteed a life of wisdom and happiness, and 'they restricted the [Greek] word *agathon* ['good'] to what is morally good'.⁴⁹ Accepting a role for material possessions as contributing factors to a happy life alongside virtue therefore became the hotly debated question in the next two centuries. We may assume that Theophrastus' position on external goods was probably common sense: happiness would require an adequate amount of bodily and external goods.⁵⁰ But he is taking a slightly different position from his master on the role of external goods (as Cicero disapprovingly noted, ch. 4, 91 [Piso]); he also became a target of Stoic attacks (e.g. Seneca *On Anger*), because his position was even further removed from theirs than Aristotle's.

Indirect evidence for the continued polemic between Peripatetics and other schools can be gleaned from the intellectual context of the school in the late fourth and the third centuries. To look for different forms of influence is important, since the interactions with rival schools have influenced both the transmission of materials and the ancient and modern reputation of the school. In his valuable study of the possible Aristotelian influence on the Stoics Sandbach scrutinised the claim of some scholars that Stoic philosophy came about as a response to Aristotle's ideas. He argued that claims to that effect are 'insecurely founded at least' (1985, preface). Sandbach mainly presents objections to the *strong* claim that some Stoic doctrines could '*only* have arisen in reply to Aristotle's or as a development of them' (emphasis mine). But this is a rather narrow perspective (the focus is mostly on whether they knew Aristotle's writings, and possible explicit references) and his conclusions are too

austere, as many reviewers have pointed out (see [Chapter 6](#), n. 9). While it is *a priori* implausible to claim that the Stoics would not know of, or react to, Aristotle's *ideas*, there is evidence for this kind of repartee. (We shall return to this issue briefly in [Chapter 6](#).)

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Politics

In his political studies Aristotle combined, as was his custom, elaborate preparatory investigations with penetrating analysis. He collected a wealth of information on existing city states and their political systems (DL 5. 27, *Constitutions of 158 Cities*), and he composed a law code for his home town, Stageira (DL 5. 4). From these studies he extracted valuable lessons and a typology of constitutions, to which he attached positive or negative judgement (good and bad constitutions). He also proposed three clear types of constitution were the most common: oligarchy ('rule of the few'), democracy ('rule of the *demos*'), tyranny ('rule of the popular strong man'). These strongly determined the discourse among later historians and political theorists. Thus we know that the historian Polybius (ca. 200–ca. 118 BCE) used these types to explain the Roman political system to his Greek and Roman audiences (*Histories* 6. 3–9).⁵¹ Aristotle's clear-cut definitions according to the holders of power were perhaps too convenient, but this was of course partly due to the actual history of Greek city state development. In the opening lines of the work he emphasises the teleological character of political activity:

Since we see that every city-state is a sort of community and that every community is established for the sake of some good (for everyone does everything for the sake of what they believe to be good), it is clear that every community aims at some good, and the community which has the most authority of all and includes all the others aims highest, that is, at the good with the most authority. This is what is called the city-state or political community.

(1.1, 1252a1–7)

Most Aristotelians wrote on a limited set of topics in politics, none of which survive. The extant titles suggest strong leaders (tyranny) were a favourite subject (Theophrastus wrote *On Tyranny*, DL 5. 45; Strato *On Kingship*, 5. 59; Demetrius on *Leadership of the People* 5. 80). Theophrastus also wrote on *How states can best be governed* (DL 5. 49), *On the Education of Children* (5. 50), and a collection of 'problems' (a special genre part of dialectical exercises), in a curiously named work *Problems in Politics, Ethics, Physics and in the Art of Love, one book* (DL 5. 47). For a more complete picture we should perhaps also include such titles as *Twenty-four books of Laws organised alphabetically* and *Ten books of an Epitomé of Laws* (5. 44), *On Laws* (5. 47), *Lectures on Ethics* (ibid.),

Epitomê of Plato's Politeia (5. 43). We can conclude that Theophrastus dealt with political and ethical problems, made an elaborate study of laws, lectured on ethics, and made a summary of Plato's *Republic*. These activities display sufficient variety to consider him fully engaged with political questions.

What little we know about Strato in this area suggests a more limited but similar interest: two works clearly dealt with political leadership (DL 5. 59: *Of Kingship* [three books], *On the Philosopher-King*). We could consider his *On Justice* and *Of the Good* as related topics, but that is the extent of the evidence about his political writings (titles, no fragments).

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Dicaearchus was probably one of the more prolific Peripatetics in this area. He wrote *Politeiai* of different cities states: Sparta (Suda 1062), Pellene, Korinth, and Athens (Cic. *Att.* 2.2.2 = fr. 2 & 9). He also wrote a *Political Dialogue* (Cic. *Att.* 13.30.2 = fr. 10), a *Three-City [dialogue]* (*Tripolitikos*; *Att.* 13.32.2 = fr. 11B). His wider interest in geography may have had a political side, but his interest in land measurement seems genuine (fr. 2).

Last but not least, a Peripatetic philosopher who was very active in the first century BCE deserves mention. Nicolaus of Damascus (ca. 64 BCE–ca. 2 CE), a close friend of Herod the Great, was a prolific author working in Rome for some time. He was active as an envoy for Herod several times, representing the king in Rome in 14 and 12 BCE, negotiating the position of the Jews in the Eastern empire; in 8 BCE he even managed to convince Augustus that Herod's invasion into the Nabataeans was their fault. He also successfully appealed to the governor of Syria in 4 BCE, influencing the succession (Malitz 2003, 2–3). He is said to have produced a *Universal History* in 144 volumes (*Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker* = *FGrH* vol. 3, 345 Müller), which Josephus probably used for his life of Herod (Sophronius, *FGrH* 90, text 2 Jacoby). He also wrote a life of Augustus, large parts of which are still preserved (modern edition by Malitz 2003). His role as 'court philosopher' is important but difficult to assess. He is reported to have been tutor to the children of Cleopatra and Marcus Antonius. By 14 CE he was still alive, as the biography of Augustus seems to have been produced after the emperor's death, perhaps as a tribute to a deceased friend (Malitz 2003, 6f). The work has a tone characteristic of panegyric, a focus on the great achievements of Augustus and a good sense of the political situation of the day. Nicolaus' interests and activities are quite in line with the role of philosophers in the Hellenistic age: prolific outputs and active as political go-between. He clearly was one of the most important 'diplomats' of his time. His biography of Augustus also fits the Peripatetic mould, as many earlier colleagues also produced biographical writings (see e.g. Ax 1999, Verhasselt 2016).

Debate on philosophy, rhetoric and education

We do not possess a ‘philosophy of education’ per se written by Aristotle, but his political writings will allow anyone to extract a set of views that could amount to one. As it happens, Aristotle was involved in an acrimonious debate on rhetoric and education with the orator Isocrates (436–338 BCE). The importance of education was emphatically present in Plato’s works (dramatically in the early dialogues, but theoretically in his *Republic*), in that he exemplified the common model of aristocratic young men attaching themselves to a teacher in order to prepare themselves for public service in politics. Plato assumes that students are intelligent and strong of character (*Rep.* 376c), and considers exposure to the right ideas at an early age important (378d). They should end up as adults who are moderate in their expression of emotions and have the good virtues courage, moderation, justice, and wisdom (389). Famously Plato had Socrates discuss a question of moral and political interest, whether good leadership qualities could be inherited, using the example of Pericles. The answer was a negative one: leadership qualities are not hereditary.

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Isocrates, one of the so-called ten Athenian orators, had his own philosophy of education and was engaged in a robust debate with Aristotle (Cic. *Orator* 62. 172; *De off.* 1. 4). He presented his school of rhetoric (started ca. 392 BCE) as a philosophical activity, because he believed that a good orator had broad knowledge of philosophy and other disciplines. He probably wrote his *Antidosis* in response to accusations of corrupting the youth with his rhetorical techniques. The work is also autobiographical in that he defends his own life as that of a good citizen. Aristotle may have written his *Protrepticus* (= *Exhortation to Philosophy*) in response to Isocrates’ bold claims about his style of rhetoric as philosophy, and in particular his rejection of purely ‘theoretical’ philosophy as useful for young men. In the *Protrepticus* Aristotle probably tried to defend the power and usefulness of philosophical speculation by emphasizing that the fundamental search for principles of nature would lead to superior knowledge in political science, as well as in reaching the highest goal in life.⁵²

One famous statement attributed to Isocrates is that ‘the root of education is bitter, but the fruits are sweet’ (*Progymnasmata* 98–99). His ideas were strongly influenced by the political circumstances of his day: he famously declared that whoever was engaged in learning about Greek literature and culture, could be considered Greek. As a political strategy, it was probably an attempt to unite the Greeks in a war effort with his rousing speech, the *Panegyricus*, in which he claimed (§50):

Our city has so far surpassed other men in thought and speech that students of Athens have become the teachers of others, and the city has made the name 'Greek' seem to be not that of a people but of a way of thinking; and people are called Greeks because they share in our education (*paideusis*) rather than in our birth.⁵³

This sentiment, reflecting on Athens' achievements ca. 380 BCE, clearly echoes Pericles' speech 50 years earlier (Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 2.34–46), but now proposes to see Greek identity as a matter of Hellenic *education* rather than *based on birth*. Whether he intended this to be a restrictive criterion, not an inclusive one, is a moot point. But for our purposes one can see how education played an important part within a broader ethical debate regarding war and peace, and the claim that *Greek* education was a crucial element in the debate is also obvious.

Isocrates' antagonism to Aristotle's ideas spread among his students. (As an aside, one may wonder how inciting hostility towards intellectual rivals featured in his educational theory, but I will leave that for others to contemplate). One of his students, named Cephisodorus (probably the orator mentioned in Dionysius of Halicarnassus *On Isocrates* 18. 4), wrote a whole work entitled *Against Aristotle*.⁵⁴ In it 'he also criticised Plato on the wrong assumption that Aristotle had adopted Plato's philosophy without any changes'.⁵⁵

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Conclusion

Peripatetics after Aristotle clearly continued to discuss, and write about, morality and civic duties. In this sense they fell in with the trend of the day. Apart from the third scholarch Strato, most wrote about issues related to leadership, character, citizenship, and education. Thus the heirs of Aristotle differed little from their founder in believing that the overall aim of life is to be happy (Theophrastus, Lyco). How to achieve *eudaimonia* was another matter, even if they broadly agreed that philosophy was the right tool. On this point we find some small variations, to the extent that the sources allow us to get an impression at all. But their achievement does not seem to have made a major impact, except that the debate over external goods continued on. For all their educational efforts and political advice to kings and city states their writings have barely survived beyond fragments. Only Theophrastus' contribution can still be measured, because his ideas were taken up and survive in roughly 356 fragments, of which some 157 concern ethics and politics (fr. 437–579 FHSG).⁵⁶

At least one thinker associated with the school in the early Roman Empire, Aspasius, theorised about this area of philosophy. He seems to have continued

the critical evaluation and supplementation of Aristotle's ethical theory, much like Theophrastus who proposed adjustments and improvements from the very start. That these are not radical reforms is to be expected: the upkeep of the Aristotelian teaching program on all fronts was a major task, which he undertook with energy and good judgement. But several of the successors managed to present new ideas and put them into practice by advising political leaders, in one case one even became an active political leader himself (Demetrius).

The changed social and political circumstances also left their mark: firstly, the competing schools began to offer alternative views on personal happiness and emotional balance as a much needed alleviation from the uncertainty of communal life under the turmoil and changing governments of the Hellenistic period.⁵⁷ From the terminology and polemical reports we can infer that four issues occupied their minds especially: (1) happiness, and how to achieve such a state; (2) the *telos*, the narrower objective in the pursuit of happiness, defined differently in different schools; (3) the nature of emotions and their link to social performance; and (4) good government, as the macro-level at which individuals build a community.

Secondly, there were fewer opportunities to contribute to the political process, which had become more autocratic. Power resided in the hands of kings, regents, or their representatives. Clearly opportunities to join in had become much scarcer (Demetrius is a clear exception); as a result, philosophers who realised they could not join in the process, chose to argue and write about a better government: to a certain extent theoretical (utopian) thinking came to replace political *praxis*. In the early Roman empire the new power structure made political activism impractical and theorising more palatable, so that most philosophers of the first and second centuries CE resorted to commentary and scholarship in order to express their views on political matters. But their views no longer aspired to change the individual behaviour or the political system by their political evaluations and aspirations. The political agenda of the day became smothered in panegyric and self-promotion. As Philostratus' *Lives of Sophists* (a history of the 'second sophistic') demonstrates all too well for the first two centuries of the empire, orators and eloquent philosophers had become courtiers and orators of ostentatious display speeches (*Lives* ii.1–3), which would strive to sidle up to, or influence, the central figure of power, the emperor. So far as we know, Nicolaus of Damascus, (possibly) Arius Didymus, and Alexander of Aphrodisias were the only Peripatetics to succeed in this ambition.⁵⁸

Notes

- 1 A similar remark at *Metaphysics* 13.4, 1078b 22–33.
- 2 Barnes 1976, 19–20. He also points out that Aristotle himself did not make the distinction.
- 3 Gould 1970, 20–1.
- 4 SHARPLES, 1.
- 5 SHARPLES 146 and texts 16AD, 16H, 16KLM.
- 6 Saunders 1995.
- 7 The *Eudemian Ethics* (either dedicated to Eudemus, Aristotle's son-in-law, or thought by some—e.g. Cicero—to have written by him) partly has the same content in the central books.
- 8 Schofield 2012, ch. 6 who argues in favour of viewing the *polis* as a 'city of reason'.
- 9 Barnes 1976, 24.
- 10 See Irwin, *Aristotle's Principles* (Oxford 1988).
- 11 Bett 1999, 25 n. 24. His evidence is *Tusc.* 5.24–5, 85; *Fin.* 5.77, 85–6; *Acad.* 1.33, 35 (included in what follows here).
- 12 Bett [n. 11] also points to *Fin.* 5.77, 85–6 and *Acad.* 1.33, 35. Other Peripatetics also incurred his displeasure by their views on the good (*De fin.* 5.14). Bett makes the interesting point (1999, 25n24) that Cicero often uses 'the Peripatetics' for 'Aristotle and his legitimate followers'.
- 13 Irwin 2012, 153–4.
- 14 Karamanolis 2006: 332. 'Astronomies' (fr. 18,3) is from Theon of Smyrna, *Aspects of Mathematics Useful for the Reading of Plato* [BT 198.14].
- 15 Karamanolis 2006: 336.
- 16 Martelli adduces DL 5. 44 and 5 . 59 for Theophrastus and Strato respectively (2012, 199n2).
- 17 Fr. 558 FHSG; the quotation is from Fortenbaugh's commentary on ethics (2011, 669).
- 18 The most elaborate treatment of Theophrastean ethics can be found in Fortenbaugh 1984, id. 2011.
- 19 Rusten 2002, 19.
- 20 RUSCH XIII, p. 67 n. 4.

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- 21 Regenbogen 1940, 1510.9–19.
- 22 On Lucian see MacLeod 1974 and Baldwin 1977.
- 23 See Sorabji 2007 on these works and later adaptations.
- 24 See, e.g. Fortenbaugh 1975; 2002; 2011, 245 ff.
- 25 The sources reporting his views cover an unusually wide range of authors and periods: from pseudo-Aristotle, Apollonius, Philodemus, Strabo, and Cicero in the BC era to Seneca, Pliny the elder, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Diogenes Laertius, all the way up to Porphyry, Libanius to medieval and Arabic authors. For a full listing and discussion of the ethical sources see Fortenbaugh (2011) 9–120.
- 26 I have used the very accessible account of Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle on Emotion* (Duckworth,

1975).

- 27 Pleasure, normally part of this set of emotions, is not relevant in the context of this particular fragment.
- 28 We know that Cicero made a ‘close study of Theophrastus and Dicaearchus in 60–59 BCE’ (Sedley 1998, 64n12, referring to *Att.* 2. 3. 4 and 2. 16. 3). Gellius (*l.c.*) also confirms this. Cf. also Runia 1989. Fortenbaugh 2013 has shown that the ‘great controversy’ is probably of Cicero’s making, which is not to say they agreed, but rather that Cicero’s has exaggerated the clash.
- 29 See below and Sharples’ edition 2011.
- 30 Fortenbaugh and White 2004, 35–7.
- 31 White reports that Arrighetti wants to credit Hieronymus ‘with the indirect method of treating symptoms rather than causes’ (White 2004, 149).
- 32 See the text quoted in [Chapter 1](#), p. 16. Cicero exclaims somewhat dramatically that Hieronymus does not deserve to be called ‘Peripatetic’ because he declared total removal of pain as the highest good (*summum enim bonum exposuit vacuitatem doloris*), a view which made him contradict the whole philosophical tradition (*De fin.* 5. 14). For a similar case, see [Chapter 5](#), p. 00.
- 33 See now Warren in Annas and Betegh 2016.
- 34 See [Chapter 6](#), p. 147. [27 ff on Tusc. 2. 15]
- 35 Aristophanes’ mention in this passage seems a unique occurrence, and his identity is controversial.
- 36 A recently recovered work by Galen is also called *Peri alupias* (although the manuscript reading is not unproblematic) and aims to offer an explanation how he did not suffer grief after losing much of his library and medicaments in a fire (ca. 192 CE).
- 37 Miriam Griffin 1989: 1 points to Cicero’s judgment: ‘the only case of a man pre-eminent *‘et doctrinae studiis et regenda civitate’* was Demetrius of Phalerum, the Peripatetic philosopher who ruled Athens for a decade in the late fourth century BC’.
- 38 See Gottschalk 2000 and next note.
- 39 See O’Sullivan 2009 and next note.
- 40 Gagarin 2000, 363.
- 41 On the scale of Critolaus see Glucker 1992.
- 42 See Baltussen 2016.
- 43 Cf. Sharples 2010a, 144–45. The influence of Stoic language in Doxography C is notable. See also Fortenbaugh (ed.) 1983, Gourinat 2011.
- 44 His *Eclogae* II. 116–152. Cf. Sharples 1999, 148. On Stobaeus see the volume edited by Reydam-Schils 2011; on Areius, see Gourinat in the same volume.
- 45 This assessment is based on Barnes 1999, though in one case it is possible to supplement his judgement, because he did not yet have available the newly found text of Galen’s *On my own Books* (edition in Boudon-Millot 2007). Boudon has confirmed the reading for the phrase ‘exegetical works such as those of *Adrastus* or of *Aspasius*’. As Barnes also notes (1999, 5–8), the few points considered by some as undercutting Aspasius’ allegiance to the Peripatetic school are not conclusive.

- 46 Barnes 1999, 2–3. Cf. Sorabji in Sharples and Sorabji 2007.
- 47 Ierodiakonou 1999, 147–8. The question of the unity of virtues is already found in Plato’s

- 48 Konstan 2001, 5. Cf. Arist. *EN* 8. 12.
- 49 Sandbach 1985, 24.
- 50 Fortenbaugh 2011, 438.
- 51 See, for example, Seager in Gibson and Harrison (2013), 317–18; Lintott 1999.
- 52 Cf. Johnson and Monte Ransome 2011.
- 53 From Papillon 2004.
- 54 Mentioned in Athenaeus, *Sophists at Dinner* 8. 354c (cf. *ibid.* 2. 60d–e and 3. 122bc).
- 55 Dion. Hal. *Epistula ad Pompeium* 1.16; Numenius in *Euseb. Praep. evang.* 14.6.9–10 (from Brill Reference online s.v. ‘Cephisodorus [5]’).
- 56 See FHSG, vol. 1, p. 5 for the figures.
- 57 See also Hatzimichaeli 2012, 29–30 who reminds us of the disruptive effects of the Mithradatic Wars, which dislodged philosophical activity away from Athens and to Alexandria and Rome.
- 58 On rulers and philosophers in the Roman empire, see Rawson 1989.

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Further Reading

For recent work on Peripatetic writings in biography, see, e.g. Ax 1999.

‘Dikaiarchs *Bios Hellados* und Varros *De vita populi Romani*’. In Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf, 279–310; on *bioi* see Verhasselt 2016.

5 Continuity and criticism in the Peripatos¹

The common thread in the foregoing chapters has been to clarify the dynamics between Aristotle and his heirs in the light of new scholarship that has been emerging in the past decades. In assessing this relationship, we have uncovered both firm doctrinal unity in many areas as well as disconcerting moments of dissent in others. I have tried to indicate on several occasions that to be a Peripatetic—whether self-declared or considered as such by others—clearly did *not* mean that one agreed with everything Aristotle had written. This chapter will revisit the debates within the Peripatos characterised by disagreement. It is my aim to clarify further the complex relationship between the avowed followers of Aristotle and their founder. Successive heads of school felt free to move away from, change, or replace certain doctrinal positions. We saw that in one case someone was called a Peripatetic on the basis of their study of Aristotle's writings (Xenarchus), in another because the person was an enthusiast and in possession of Aristotle's library (Apellicon, above p. 167). Clearly several different criteria applied to use or earn this label—mostly assigned by outsiders.

Supporting evidence for the apparent tolerance of diverging views within philosophical schools seems to come from a comment made by Galen of Pergamum (129–216 CE), who finds it quite normal to encourage students of philosophy to report on disagreement. In a passage from a work (only preserved in Arabic) entitled *On how to recognise the best doctor*, the Aristotelianising physician leaves little doubt that dissenting voices in philosophical schools was a well-known fact. When he sums up what kind of student will become a good philosopher-physician, he proclaims that a student with the right instruction:

will be able to describe the doctrines of each of these [i.e. the Ancients], but that the *perfect* student can also state those of their successors, outlining the differences and agreements, including his own judgment on their differences, justifying correct doctrines and exposing those that are erroneous.²

There the ‘Ancients’ refers to the classical philosophers. It would seem, then, that second-century trainees in philosophy could excel, according to Galen (himself trained in the doctrines of several different schools), only if they had mastered the various views of the figure heads as well as those of their students, *including how they diverged from* the supposed founders. Galen’s expectation may well be an impossible ideal, especially since he wants students to sort the wheat from the chaff, so to speak, as if deciding which views are the correct ones is so easy. Yet it is a striking comment, which shows an ambition to be aware of the core of a doctrine (the ‘correct’ version) and its various developments (some of which may be erroneous), in particular if they displayed disagreements *within* the school. (On Galen’s contemporary Alexander of Aphrodisias, who wrote a special essay entitled *On the difference between Aristotle and his associates concerning mixtures [of premises]* see below p. 120.)

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Further testimony on how Aristotle’s ideas had come under attack inside and outside the school survives in the work of Themistius (317–387 CE), who notes that he could:

easily recount men like Cephisodorus and Euboulides and Timaeus and Dicaearchus and a whole army of those who have attacked Aristotle the Stagirite. Their words survive into this day, maintaining their odium and love of strife.

(Themistius, 23 *Sophist* 285C = Dicaearchus fr. 6)

The many authors attacking Aristotle—non-Peripatetics and one Peripatetic—no doubt did so for a variety of reasons. Cephisodorus and Euboulides spoke in defence of their own master Isocrates, Timaeus the historian in an attempt to settle an ideological score in one particular area of study (recounted in Polybius 12.11), and, contrary to what one might expect, the Peripatetic Dicaearchus, disagreeing on major points in psychology. Themistius ‘and a whole army of those who have attacked Aristotle the Stagirite’ suggests that there could be more of both kinds. This chapter will try to illustrate whom we might think of as Peripatetic critics.

Another way to look at the problem is to ask the question whether we should be concerned about the allegiance of Aristotle’s followers, if and when they criticise him. (Criticisms levelled at Aristotle and his school by ‘outsiders’ will be dealt with in [Chapter 6](#) ‘Rivals and devotees.’) This seemingly harmless point has been reviewed from different angles already, but now we will need to assess what these criticisms amount to, after we have revisited the question how we might define a Peripatetic. Note that the question is not just a matter of sophistry or pedantry. Firstly, in the past three decades a much clearer picture of the Peripatetic tradition has emerged, giving us more than ever before good

reason to investigate how criticism can nonetheless allow for continuity. Disagreement is after all a core driver of philosophy. A critical stance can also assist in strengthening a philosophical system, making it more robust and impervious to objections. It may seem unproblematic to consider self-declared Peripatetics as working within a certain framework, but once those outside the school start labelling individual philosophers ‘Peripatetics’, things become a little less self-evident. One way to answer the question regarding the use of the term is to say that it was primarily to distinguish this group (followers of Aristotle) from other groups (those following Plato, Zeno, and Epicurus). The fact that mostly outsiders use the label would support that. But, as we saw, there is also room for non-partisan sympathisers, that is, those thinkers who adopt some of the Aristotelian ideas (and without declaring themselves ‘Peripatetics’), who became referred to as ‘Peripatetic’. And lastly, there were also those who had a quite eclectic interest in Aristotle’s philosophy without a particularly strong commitment to his doctrines (e.g. Cicero, Plutarch, Galen, Themistius).

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Thus we end up with *three* distinct, but partly overlapping, groups: (1) the *internal critics* who attempt to make the system stronger; and (2) the *external critics*, who attempt to expose the flaws in the system. The latter group consists of either (2a) those very partial to Aristotelian doctrine or (2b) those only interested in certain aspects of Aristotelian thought. How later generations characterised these different groups determines to some extent how the label ‘Peripatetic’ came to be used in a rather diffuse way. As we saw, the question of orthodoxy did not receive much attention until the first century, but became really important during the early Roman empire. The approaches of all three groups will be illustrated with specific examples to make clear how each individual case is unique on account of its circumstances and specific sources.

The three groups sketched above will in part set the agenda for this and the next chapter. First, I shall comment on the early years of the Peripatos, and what I consider a useful distinction in looking at who can be considered a Peripatetic. After that I shall discuss some examples of ‘internal’ dissent (group 1) with regard to important views of Aristotle. In my conclusion I hope to bring the two aspects of criticism and continuity together in a way that may clarify the tension. It goes without saying that this is not a comprehensive discussion, but one that is representative of the most important strands in the Aristotelian tradition. [Chapter 6](#) will discuss the various challenges to the Aristotelian system by external critics.

The first three generations

As indicated in [Chapter 1](#), the response to Aristotle's ideas inside the school can be gleaned from how the earliest Peripatetics examined, adapted, and expanded his ideas. Thus it was appropriate to give a selective discussion of Aristotle's thought as seen 'through the eyes' of the next generations. Significantly, the early successors did *not* yet regard the works of their master as a fixed and complete body of work, i.e. a canon.³ This is important to acknowledge in that the successors of Aristotle were more focused on the challenge of keeping up an unprecedented range of research activities which Aristotle's pioneering research had bequeathed to the world.⁴

Theophrastus' disagreement with Aristotle on fundamental issues in metaphysics, meteorology, and biology (to name a few) have more recently been acknowledged as perceptive elaborations of the Aristotelian system. As we saw, the fact that early members of the Peripatos as a rule took Aristotle's ideas as their starting point, did not prevent them from formulating criticism and disagreement. In the process of reviewing Aristotle's pioneering explorations of many areas of knowledge, his followers found plenty of gaps as well as inconsistencies. Aristotle's expansive intellectual groundwork often led to sketchy outlines which required both additional detail and adjustment. As mentioned in the introduction, Aristotle was 'the most inconclusive of systematisers' (Dodds 1923: 10). In short, Aristotle's philosophical edifice was treated as a work in progress—we should not go so far as to say it was still a building site, but rather a large, much advanced architectural structure with sketches for further development and shoring up; in philosophical terms: a dynamic set of proposals and hypotheses which offer a productive system to understand and explain the world.

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A good example of an expansive discussion was Theophrastus' *Metaphysics*, one of the few surviving early examples of a response to Aristotle's work of the same name.⁵ This brief work survived in the manuscript tradition as an 'attachment' to the much larger *Metaphysics* of Aristotle.⁶ The work shows Theophrastus analysing the central topic of the work: fundamental concepts or principles of being. The work is also an illustration of how exceptions to the rule exist: it is now commonly accepted that this 'essay' on the first principles must have a quite early date, responding to early stages of Aristotle's metaphysical ideas on principles.⁷

This supposed 'dependence' on the treatises of his older colleague has too often led to the negative view that the attitude of students was purely 'reactive', thus implying that their work was derivative and, for that reason alone, inferior. But such a verdict is both unhistorical and unhelpful. So I will reiterate the fact that Theophrastus, the second head of the school, deliberately traded on the

presence of the Aristotelian corpus. This was already recognised in antiquity (see also [Chapter 1](#), p. 5) and is crucial to a proper understanding of his approach:

Theophrastus, as is his custom in other works as well, when he is dealing with matters similar to those which have been dealt with by Aristotle . . . touches lightly on those matters which he knows have been said by Aristotle earlier, but follows up more diligently other things not dealt with by Aristotle.

(F 72A FHSB = Boethius *in de interpretatione* 1 Introd.)

His work should be considered a responsible continuation and extension of Aristotle's, not a mere by-product. In other words, building on their mentor's work was a sensible thing to do for the successors, while their additions and corrections were useful and necessary to improve the overall philosophical system.

The immediate result is that we cannot expect that a simple narrative will emerge of the philosophical knowledge we now call 'Peripatetic'. Scholars studying the tradition have already commented that one may just as well speak of 'Aristotelian'. Recently Bob Sharples decided to use 'the term "Peripatetic" rather than "Aristotelian" simply because of the ambiguity of the latter'.⁸ 'Aristotelian' also implies fidelity to Aristotle, while 'Peripatetic' does not. The 2001 volume coming out of the annual Keeling symposium in London, edited by Sharples, was aptly titled *Whose Aristotle? Whose Aristotelianism?*, to emphasise that each age will to some extent create its own version of Aristotle. Jonathan Barnes, keeping the term 'Aristotelian', pointedly clarified its meaning as follows: 'later texts give us an Aristotelian epistemology, not Aristotle's epistemology'.⁹ His use of 'Aristotelian' clearly plays on the double meaning the term can have: 'of Aristotle' and 'derived from Aristotle' (cf. n. 8).

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So how should we understand the label 'Peripatetic'? There are, it seems to me, three possibilities: (1) 'Peripatetic' is mostly an externally imposed label, which primarily refers to the location (*peripatos*; walkway), where the followers of Aristotle met; it is a useful term to distinguish them from other philosophical groups; (2) 'Peripatetic' means 'someone who adheres to the doctrines of the school leader' (i.e. loyally and unreservedly); or (3) 'Peripatetic' means 'someone who has a keen interest in the doctrines of Aristotle, but is free to discuss, adjust, and contradict them'. Taking the long perspective on the tradition set out in this book has revealed that asking for doctrinal orthodoxy over five centuries means we are asking the wrong question, firstly, because the relationship between followers and founder is

more complex than that of the leader generating a unified doctrine which is mindlessly absorbed by the ‘students’, and secondly, because there is a way to formulate a set of core notions which determined the framework *within which* those in the school operated and thus manage to maintain a sense of dynamic collaboration and intellectual tolerance.

Dissenting voices within the school

There was a lot of debate within the school about both the core and the periphery of the master’s philosophical thought. The standard accounts suggest that it was mostly refinement and clarification that drove such comments, but this position is in need of some revision, because these two modes of response were not the only ways to approach Aristotle’s work. The three stages in the school’s history outlined in [Chapter 1](#) can serve as a framing device for the account of how later generations responded to Aristotle’s ideas. We are certainly justified in asking what common denominator linked all these thinkers in such a way that they all still deserved to be regarded as Peripatetics. If we want to maintain some sense of coherence about the school (in the sense of ‘tradition’), then we are forced to assume that a set of core concepts were taken for granted: Aristotle’s core doctrines would include the four causes, the categories, hylomorphism, potentiality and actuality, the *pros hen* notion, soul as the form of the body, compatibility between sense organ and sense object (with an analogue between the form of objects and the mind), and habituation, even if these are not found mentioned explicitly in the extant fragments of his successors (so far as I know most are not rejected either). While this is a rather risky argument from silence, it seems to offer the best explanation in the face of limited evidence. I will offer a further argument about this point in [Chapter 6](#).

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Faced with the breadth of Aristotle’s ‘research program’, one cannot deny that consolidation and refinement must have been a concern for the immediate successors, especially those who knew Aristotle personally. But their individual responses to the school founder were not simply conformist and submissive, but also critical and expansive.¹⁰ Theophrastus was perhaps a ‘safe pair of hands’ when it came to continuing the broad exploration of the established areas of physics, ethics, and logic, but he was clearly more than just the minder of Aristotle’s doctrines. He remained alert to topics that his predecessor had left untouched or unfinished (I will present some examples shortly). Refinement of Aristotle’s large-scale project is no mean feat, since it presupposes an understanding of the existing body of ideas (see [Chapter 2](#)). So while we can confirm that Theophrastus and others were in the business of filling gaps,

correcting arguments, or testing them against new evidence, many of these activities suggest his work is an ongoing enterprise in order to establish a comprehensive and complete system out of Aristotle's foundational (but often incomplete) discussions.

It would seem, however, that something changed once direct contact with the first scholarch was lost, a transitional phase we might say, even if the second and third generations maintained some of the original spirit of his style of research and evaluation of their findings. Then the second stage comes into play in the first century BCE, roughly six to eight generations after Aristotle's death. The historical and linguistic gap between the school founder and his readers had widened, and understanding his works was a difficult undertaking, which would require special skills. The manner of reading was no longer focused on expanding and renewing, but on *interpreting*. This stage is now often referred to as 'revival', in the first century BCE, which was stimulated by new editorial work on Aristotle's corpus as it was being rediscovered and brought back to Rome—the new centre of scholarship and literary innovation.¹¹ The revival came with the move of Greek philosophy to Rome. Perhaps the famous embassy to Rome comprising of three philosophers in 155 BCE prepared the ground, but a more important event contributed even more: General Sulla captured Athens and brought (part of) Aristotle's library to Rome somewhere between 86 and 82 BCE. We know that Cicero had access to it, as he mentions using it in his *Letter to Atticus* 4.10.1 (dated April 22, 55 BCE), when he refers to 'Faustus' library'.

The 'edition' put together by Andronicus of Rhodes (between 40–20 BCE¹²) inaugurated a third stage of Peripatetic activity, in which doing philosophy now had a clear basis in *texts* and became embedded in commentary *on* Aristotle. Good examples still available are the works of Aspasius, the first known commentator (100–150 CE), and especially those of Alexander of Aphrodisias, the best known (ca. 200 CE).

In his paper on the revival of commentary in the Platonic school, David Sedley has shown how the rediscovery of Plato and Aristotle in the first century BCE [stage 2 in my analysis] was as much driven by a linguistic need for clarification as by the need for philosophical exegesis.¹³ Language and exegesis are obviously closely linked, but Sedley's point was not a general one about language, but one about the shift to a different type of Greek in the Hellenistic period, the so-called 'common Greek' or *Koinē*. The important case study he adduces to illustrate his point is the (anonymous) commentary on the *Theaetetus*, preserved in a papyrus and roughly dated to the first century BCE or CE.¹⁴ This work illustrates how the comments often concern very basic points of language, and focus on passages which contain unusual words. It is quite probable that a very similar issue of language was one factor in the process of elucidation of Andronicus' editorial activity on the newly found

No matter how much we try to give an account of the school's evolution that satisfies our need for coherence and smooth progression, we will now have to turn to the various reports on dissent and antagonism *within* the Lyceum. These stories of doctrinal disputes, professional rivalry, and personal antagonism complicate a coherent account. It will, therefore, be helpful to gauge the extent of such disparities and find out whether it concerned robust debate, mild disagreement, or simply playful animosity. A few examples may clarify the types, before we examine some detailed case studies. Of the latter category we may point to Lyco and Aristo of Ceos, fourth and fifth heads of the school, who appear to have cultivated a playful rivalry, if we can trust Themistius' report in his *Oration* 21. At *Or.* 21, 255b–c Aristo is said to have made greater progress, although Lyco had a great reputation for learning. Lyco apparently expressed this in the playful comment that 'the lame outran the sound of foot', alluding to the fact that Aristo had a crippled leg (*to skelos*).¹⁶ We might call this a friendly kind of animosity. However, a more serious kind of animosity seems to have existed between Lyco and Hieronymus: DL uses the Greek word 'enemy' (*echthros*; fr. 1 White). We do not have a clear understanding as to why they fell out. An example of doctrinal debate concerns, for instance, Hieronymus' theory of vision (mentioned [Chapter 2](#), p. 30). It not only tries to offer an explanation for poorer vision at a distance, but also involves emanations coming from the eye, a very un-Aristotelian idea (rejected at *Sens.* 5, 438a25–6 as 'irrational'). The emanation theory of smell also makes its appearance in Theophrastus *De sensu* 9.¹⁷ Like Theophrastus, Hieronymus was not in full agreement with Aristotle's theory of perception.

Some case studies

In order to demonstrate the tendency of growing divergence and increasingly open criticism of Aristotle's ideas, I will present some brief case studies, discussing individual positions of the scholars and other Peripatetics (Theophrastus to Critolaus, nos. 1–5). The set also includes expansions of Aristotle's theories, which often start with a critical evaluation (6–8).

The first generations of Peripatetics articulated a number of objections against, and criticisms of, Aristotle. Theophrastus (second head 322–278 BCE), Strato (third head 287–69), Dicaearchus (d. 275), and Xenarchus (first century BCE) each raised points in different areas of Aristotelian philosophy. While all four no doubt saw themselves as members of the Peripatos, these criticisms offer corrections and alternatives at a fundamental level, so we will do well to

take them seriously. We know, for instance, that Theophrastus, Strato, and Xenarchus rejected the so-called fifth substance (*quintessentia* or *aethēr*), that Aristoxenus attempted to join Aristotelian and Pythagorean doctrines; that Dicaearchus scrutinised the theory of the soul and adjusted it; that Critolaus amalgamated Aristotle's theory of the influence of the heavens on the world with the Stoic theory of providence, while according to Cicero he showed signs of heterodoxy, and his student Diodorus disagreed on the supreme good (*De fin.* 5. 14 = 1B SHARPLES = fr. 11 W.) and therefore did not deserve to be called a Peripatetic; and that Clearchus of Soli combined Plato's views on the human soul with Aristotle's. It is these kinds of examples that evoke questions about the idea of allegiance to core doctrines and the unity of the school—even though they should not simply be taken as evidence for a 'dysfunctional' school.

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As a first step into the discussion we may refer briefly to Andrea Falcon's recent analysis of the objections to Aristotle formulated by Xenarchus of Seleucia (first century BCE). Falcon ends his book with some useful insights on this particular question of dissent, in this case regarding physics. He suggests that the later reception of Aristotle's physics, which became so influential from late antiquity onwards [stage 3] and into the early modern age, has obscured the fact that much of the Aristotelian physical system was controversial. In other words, his argument is that, in looking back, we judge the early Peripatetic tradition down to the first century BCE, too much through the eyes of the late antique interpreters. Falcon comments (2012, 201):

we should not assume that the first-century BCE return to Aristotle was bound to end up in acceptance of his thought. Quite the contrary. What we know about Xenarchus suggests that disagreement with Aristotle was a possible outcome of the early engagement with his works. Moreover, at least in the case of Xenarchus this disagreement was most likely to occur in physics.

As we will see, the following case studies confirm this on the basis of the objections that Aristotle's successors raised. The following eight case studies exemplify the trend of critical evaluation and elaboration of Aristotle's philosophical system.

Case study no. 1: Theophrastus

As already set out, Theophrastus engaged with the full range of Aristotle's writings, patiently filling gaps and suggesting additions to the system. We are fortunate to have around 15 small works and some 900 fragments which, although a fraction of his total output, give us a good measure of his ideas.¹⁸ A

well-known example, his definition of place, is of interest for our present purposes. Aristotle defined it as a kind of ‘epiphenomenon’, a property of substances.¹⁹ The theory had in fact few defenders in antiquity.²⁰

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Theophrastus raised pertinent questions with regard to Aristotle’s definition of natural place: Aristotle had defined this difficult and abstract concept as the inner limit of the surrounding place of a physical object (*Phys.* 214b12–215a11). What Theophrastus saw as problematic is the idea that *natural* place, i.e. where the elements will naturally go, such as fire to the outer rim of the sublunary world (*Cael.* 310b3), has therefore some kind of power (*dunamis*) which might be taken as a final cause.²¹ One reason for such a strategy is to counter the atomist claim that the vacuum alone could explain such locomotion of things moving into their place: it is intended ‘to make place *explain* (i.e. be the *aitia* of) the natural movements of the elements’ (Sorabji 1988: 186). When in the *Physics* Aristotle defined place as a thing’s surroundings which should be immobile, Theophrastus found this problematic for several reasons: place may not be surface; place may not be immobile, etc. Such puzzles signal quite clearly that Aristotle’s view is considered unsatisfactory, as we can also see in Simplicius’ fuller discussion (*Commentary on Physics* 639,12–20, part = fr. 149 FHSG):

May it not be that place is not something that exists in its own right but is spoken according to the arrangement and position of bodies, with reference to their natures and capacities? And similarly in the case of animals and plants and in general all things with a differentiated structure, whether living or not, provided that their nature involves a shape. [. . .] And for this reason each thing is said to be in its own space by virtue of its having its proper ordering.

It is of interest to observe that Simplicius (ca. 530 CE) is clearly reading Theophrastus’ *Physics* alongside Aristotle’s (‘Theophr. in his *Physics* presents *aporiai* . . .’, 604.5–6) and then develops a view which goes beyond the Theophrastean comments.²² The result is that Theophrastus’ puzzles (*aporiai*) now lead to a new interpretation, which involves a criticism of Aristotle’s view, except that in the account of Simplicius it is made to look like a further *development* rather than a correction. Late commentators were not keen to expose Aristotle’s flaws: not only did they prefer to see Aristotle (and his followers) as a continuation of Plato, but they also attempted to show the power of his thought by creative interpretation, holding on to an image of a consistent thinker.

Case study no. 2: Strato

When Strato of Lampsacus inherited the leadership from Theophrastus (d. 287 BCE) as third head of the Peripatos, he developed a quite different doctrine in physics from what we can read in Aristotle's treatise. Nicknamed 'the natural philosopher' (*ho physikos*), he came up with a theory of matter which constituted a fundamental deviation from the core notion of Aristotle's physics.

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How do Strato's ideas constitute a departure from some important positions in Aristotle?²³ First, he rejected the notion of an external prime mover as cause of the universe (fr. 18 Sharples = fr. 32 W.), opting for a more mechanistic model which appeals to *tuchē*, 'fortune', and a notion of nature which is independent yet not completely mechanistic.²⁴ It seems that he tried to reduce differentiation in the theory by aiming for one unified concept of motion (fr. 71). As to its material basis he moves in a different direction (noted by Simplicius, fr. 75) with a new theory of matter consisting of corpuscles and void to account for the difference in weight of objects. On void we have this intriguing report:

This, then, is what Aristotle says about the void. But Strato of Lampsacus tries to show that the void divides the whole body, so that it is not continuous, saying 'Neither light nor heat nor any other bodily power would be able to pass right through water or air or another body [. . .]. For how would the ray of light pass right through to the base of the vessel [of water]? For if the liquid did not have pores, but the rays divided it by force, the result would be that full vessels would overflow, and it would not be the case that some of the rays would be reflected upwards, while others pass through below.

(Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* 693,10 ff.)

Just before this passage Simplicius had set out the main points of Aristotle's notion of the void: rejecting the atomists' view that the void is necessary for movement, Aristotle argued that bodies are continuous (internally) without containing any empty space. Next Simplicius brings in Strato (not Theophrastus) offering his arguments to allow for empty space in bodies: the points he makes rely on observation ('light passing through water or air') and the assumption that light is a body. Whilst the observation itself cannot be disputed (we do *see* light pass through water and air), the inference that this implies there are 'pores' is of course not necessarily valid. Note how he tries to make his argument more persuasive by indicating the negative results of the opposing position: if we assume that light would not pass through empty space (in the form of pathways or pores), it would have to force its way through water and a vessel containing that water would overflow. Observation tells us that this does not happen.

As we already saw, Strato also tried to solve a problem in Aristotle's theory of place (Algra 1995) and claimed that falling objects accelerate (fr. 73). He did

not accept the tendency of upward movement by the elements (as did Arist. at *Phys.* 4.5), but rather a downward motion which could result in a dislocation by heavier elements of lighter elements (which might then be pushed up and replaced, a process he calls *antiperistasis*). And he criticised Aristotle on his definition of time, protesting that it is not a *measure* of change, although he hardly differs from him in his considered view of time overall (fr. 75–6).

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All these examples illustrate how Strato took a very different direction when discussing Aristotle's views in physics—a field of study that seems to have had his special interest. A further point of difference is that, unlike others, he discussed zoology in the broader context of physiology (Wehrli 1969, 103). As the leader of the school, did these un-Aristotelian views make him less a Peripatetic? Clearly not: ancient sources still classify him as a member of the school (DL 5. 58). This suggests that it was not unusual for a later school leader to deviate from the founder's ideas. In short, there was considerable tolerance with regard to dissent. There is the possibility that his views were not considered as dissent and deviation, but development and elaboration, although in this case it seems less likely given his very different solutions to the problems.

Case study no. 3: Eudemos

For the Peripatetic Eudemos, a contemporary of Theophrastus and the competitor for the succession (Aristotle chose the latter over the former on his deathbed, as the story goes), several serious points of disagreement arise in the surviving materials. These concern issues in physics and in logic.

In Simplicius' *Commentary on Physics* 195,3–7 (fr. 66 Stork = fr. 47 W.) we learn about Eudemos' views on the number of principles in physics:

What kind of substance, then, is it that Alexander takes to be the kind involving enmattered form in this passage? If it is substance in the strict sense, the kind that is opposed to the other categories, the argument is defective, but if it is the kind that is said of all generated forms in common, all would be well. It seems to me that what Eudemos of Rhodes says also tends towards this view, albeit that too is obscurely expressed.

The passage indicates that there is some difficulty in establishing clearly what Eudemos thought about the matter (is Alexander an 'intermediary' source or a parallel?), but Simplicius' generous reading pushes towards an interpretation that reads 'substance' as applying to 'all generated forms in common'. Eudemos also expressed contrary views on the infinite (*to apeiron*), raising problems with regard to Aristotle's *Physics* books 2–3. Mayhew has drawn attention to the fact

that Eudemus apparently offered six considerations to make the existence of the infinite plausible (fr. 82.52–59 Stork = Simpl. *Comm. on Phys.* 468,4–7), not five, as Aristotle claimed.²⁵ The passage shows that Eudemus rearranged the various points Aristotle had proposed. Mayhew observes ‘Eudemus arguably improves the organization and presentation, as infinite division and addition do seem to go together’ and concludes that Eudemus’ argument is an effective objection: Aristotle’s point (203b15–25) that the infinite goes on in thought without limit is countered by Eudemus’ comment that imagining something in thought does not make it so in reality—a refinement rather than an objection.

Eudemus also differed in his approach on several points in logic, in particular the so-called conversion of propositions into different modes (negative, assertoric, universal, and mixed premises).²⁶ In this context it is worth pointing out that Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 180–220 CE) wrote a special essay entitled *On the difference between Aristotle and his associates concerning mixtures [of premises]* (fr. 40AEF Stork). In these passages reference is made to special considerations to salvage Aristotle’s modeling of premises in *Prior Analytics* 1.6 and 1.9. Although Eudemus is not mentioned by name, evidence about their writings strongly suggests that Theophrastus and Eudemus are meant (compare fr. 36–37 Stork = fr. 11 W.).²⁷

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Case study no. 4: Dicaearchus

While earlier case studies considered topics from non-living objects in physics, this case study involves the debate on the nature of the soul. Of course, we are still in the domain of physics, because in Aristotelian terms physics is characterised by motion (*Phys.* books 5–8), so that ‘ensouled beings’ (*self-movers*) are considered part of physics ([Chapter 2](#), p. 41).

According to most ancient reports Dicaearchus was considered a member of the school.²⁸ Philosophically, he disagreed with both Plato and Aristotle. Thus he did not accept Plato’s *harmonia* theory (cf. his *Phaedo* where the character Simmias objected to this theory), nor did he agree with Aristotle. The evidence presents us with a conundrum. In some of the fragmentary texts for Dicaearchus the *harmonia* theory is found—or so it would seem. For instance in Cicero we read:

All the force by which we do or feel anything is spread equally in all living bodies. It is inseparable from the body, for it is nothing (by itself) nor is there anything except the body, single and plain . . .

(Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 1.21 = part of fr. 19 Mirhady)

On this reading Dicaearchus distributes consciousness and feeling across the body in a tightly knit relation with the body; this may explain why Cicero thinks that he denied that mind is anything at all. Dicaearchus regards the '[sensory] force' in us to act or experience something as deeply rooted within the body, so he refuses to suppose that it is a distinct entity that is in one particular place. Such a view seems problematic in relation to Aristotle's position that the soul is not 'distributed' in this concrete way, nor is it completely inseparable (*On the soul* 3.5).

In his recent analysis of Dicaearchus' theory of the mind Victor Caston offers a lucid and persuasive case to show that the apparent disagreement does not necessarily affect his allegiance to Aristotle. It would seem that Dicaearchus tried to avoid having to admit to existence of a *substantial* soul independent of the body, but that did not prevent him from having positive views on the soul. It is possible that the fragmentary state of the evidence stands in the way here: some texts could be read as Dicaearchus saying he eliminates the soul altogether (e.g. frs. 15, 20). However, Dicaearchus is not eliminating the mental in us (Caston 2001, 178), but is rather trying to establish a solution to the problem inherent in the *harmonia* theory, namely that *harmonia* ('harmonious balance') cannot allow a soul to exist independent of the body, because it is defined as a tuning, that is, an arrangement of the bodily parts, i.e. dependent on these parts (in modern terms: it supervenes on the parts, or rather their arrangement). In short, Dicaearchus 'is not an eliminativist . . . in the sense that there is any *substance* over and above the body. That is, he adopts a form of monism, which holds that mental states are just attributes of a single bodily substance'. Dicaearchus even wanted to get rid of the word 'soul' (179–80, Cicero *loc. cit.*). From this position Caston argues that Dicaearchus' position remains close to Aristotle, but may still differ in how there can be a causal role for the mental in the way in which he claimed it.²⁹ But now Aristotle is somehow forced to admit to a form of causation which emerges from the body, as he is convinced that physical powers alone do not suffice (a plant would disintegrate without an additional *structuring* force that binds all its parts). Dicaearchus objects to this kind of causation and wants to have material monism, but without mental efficacy. One might call this a compromise or perhaps better, an even-handed correction.³⁰

Concerning theories of the soul, another Peripatetic should be mentioned. Clearchus of Soli (Cyprus; ca. 320–ca. 300 BCE) had a keen interest in Plato

(wrote an encomium on him and notes on the mathematical parts of the *Republic*. He seems to have blended some of Plato's views on the human soul with Aristotle's account: in his notes on the *Rep.* 546B he comes close to Xenocrates, who also wrote about the *Rep.* (Suda); in his comments on the soul geometry in the *Timaeus*.

Case study no. 5: Xenarchus

This example is again more centrally connected to physics and in particular astronomy. Until recently Xenarchus of Seleucia was a little known figure in the Peripatetic tradition. But he was known especially for his criticisms of Aristotle's so-called fifth substance, which Aristotle had attributed to the heavens. His critique raised the question whether he was a loyal Peripatetic gone rogue or an outside critic.³¹ Falcon has argued we should take him seriously as a Peripatetic and justifies seeing him a keen reader of Aristotle. He rightly points out that in Xenarchus' work exegesis and philosophy go hand in hand, and that his keen interest in Aristotle is genuine.³²

Xenarchus criticises Aristotle's fifth element or substance, and (like Theophrastus) denies the existence of *aether*.³³ In his criticism of the fifth substance Xenarchus articulates apparently many objections. Simplicius outlined these as part of six assumptions, which were seen to underlie Aristotle's argument regarding the *quintessential* (so our sources Simplicius and Alexander tell us). I will not list them all here, but will give one example to convey the flavour of the arguments.³⁴

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In his *On the heaven* Aristotle claimed that there was a special simple body that performed a circular motion, and hence was the ideal candidate to be attributed to the heaven which is also presumed to move in a (perfect) circle. Among Xenarchus' attacks one stands out concerning the circular motion of the heaven cannot be the natural motion of any *simple* body. After all, Aristotle had tried to match up all the other elements with their 'natural' motion. But, as Falcon explains, Xenarchus objects because he thinks that 'circular motion cannot be the natural motion of *any* simple body' (2012, 90). Clearly Xenarchus has a point: on the strict logic of his reading, the notion of difference in speed in different parts of the whole will be hard to explain on the basis of a simple movement. In a sphere the circular motion near the centre is different from that further removed from the centre. This 'complexity' of motions can therefore not be represented by one simple element. Thus Xenarchus joined many other thinkers, inside and outside the Peripatos, in rejecting this notion of the fifth substance.

Case study no. 6: Aristoxenus of Tarentum

Aristoxenus' deep interest in musical theory included admiration for Pythagorean ideas. Pythagoras and his followers were known for applying 'mathematics' and number symbolism to the physical universe, including to music. Pythagoras is credited with the discovery of the correlation between the length of a material that can create a sound and the pitch it will produce. Thus he and his followers developed a numerical model to represent musical scales.³⁵

Armed with this knowledge Aristoxenus attempted to join Aristotelian and Pythagorean doctrines. This is an unusual blend of philosophical approaches, especially given what we know about Aristotle's criticism of the Pythagoreans (*Metaph.* 1.5), and constitutes, if not dissent, a clear divergence from Aristotle's considered view.

Case study no. 7: Critolaus

Critolaus may well have attempted to amalgamate Aristotle's theory of the influence of the heavens on the world with the Stoic theory of providence, while defending Aristotle's view of the eternity of the world (fr. 13 W.) and the fifth substance. But the problem with the evidence is that his arguments, making use of the Stoic basic assumptions in order to turn them against themselves, could be misread as him accepting Stoic views. The deceptive effect of his strategy cannot be evaluated incontestably. It will, therefore, be wise not to press the point.

Critolaus' moral philosophy went beyond Aristotle's ethics (Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 5. 17 = fr. 21 W.). Critolaus continued to defend Aristotle's position on the highest good (*telos*, *summum bonum*) by including all three classes of goods (Clem. *Strom.* II, 316D = fr. 19 W.; cf. Arist. *EN* 1. 8 [see also [Chapter 4](#), p. 85]), although the phrasing of his position does show some Stoic colouring (for instance, echoing Zeno's definition of 'good flow'). Similarly, his rejection of pleasure as an evil, because it has dire consequences, resembles Cleanthes' view.³⁶

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Case study no. 8: Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 150–ca. 220 CE)³⁷

Alexander of Aphrodisias, the famous and prolific Aristotelian commentator, offered a range of interpretations of Aristotle's writings. His exegesis is detailed,

follows the text closely ('running commentary'), and is clearly Peripatetic in his broad outlook and reading of Aristotle. Formally this was recognised when he was appointed to the chair of Peripatetic philosophy in Athens around 200 CE. Alexander assumed that Aristotle's corpus represented a coherent philosophy. If no answer was offered to a question, he would suggest possibilities in a way he thought was consistent with Aristotle's writings, and he would be quite unfamiliar with the (twentieth-century) idea that discrepancies in the text might be the result of developmental *stages* in his thought. Overall, 'he avoids, if at all possible, openly criticising Aristotle or contradicting him'.³⁸

There are, however, several clear elements in his interpretations that may strike us as un-Aristotelian. Alexander's view on fate was partly influenced by his polemic against the Stoics' notion that every aspect of the world is ordered by the same principle. Alexander's attempt to find 'a middle ground between the Epicurean denial of providence on the one hand and, on the other, the view that everything is governed by divine providence down to the smallest detail, which he attributes to the Stoics'.³⁹ In his own work *On the soul* 24.21–3 he seems to say that the soul is a power 'resulting from, or supervening on, the mixture of bodily elements', a position which suggests materialism; it has, however, been explained as a claim which is part of his attempt to refute this position.⁴⁰ Yet Alexander does resort to using the notion of emergence (of the soul) in order to steer clear of the dualism of Plato and the materialism of the Stoics. The difference in approach can have implications, since Alexander writes from a systematic point of view on the soul, while Aristotle's treatment is dialectical.⁴¹ He considered Aristotle's logic the correct one (rejecting the Stoic model), but he is known to have made some errors in interpreting Aristotle. We may conclude that Alexander is an Aristotelian defending Aristotle's world view, even though some of his elaborations and clarifications fall under the broader description of 'creative and expansive interpretation'.⁴² His attempt to show Aristotle as presenting a coherent and comprehensive interpretation sometimes leads to interpretations which extend what is in Aristotle. Alexander fully represents the new orthodoxy of Aristotelianism.



At the start of this chapter we identified three groups who were somehow involved in criticising Aristotle during the Hellenistic and Roman period. The first group was labelled 'internal critics', referring to some of the successors of Aristotle. I now move on to the 'external critics, the second (2a) and third (2b) groups, which we may also associate with stages 2–3 of the broader reception of Aristotle's philosophy (Chapter 1, p. 5–7). These two remaining groups were labelled partisan critics ('honorary Peripatetics') and non-partisan critics (admirers of parts of Aristotle's doctrine). By way of transition, I will end this chapter with one example to illustrate a type actually in-between, that of a partisan *reader*, before we move on to a fuller characterisation of the intellectual

context of Aristotelian philosophy in the next chapter (Chapter 6). The case study in the previous section on Xenarchus may perhaps also be regarded as in-between internal and external readers of Aristotle, depending on whether one follows Moraux, who considered the label Peripatetic ‘honorary’, or Falcon, who considers Xenarchus’ serious interest in Aristotelian ideas as a sign that he is a Peripatetic.⁴³

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The Stoic Panaetius (late second and early first centuries BCE) marked a shift in Stoic thought in that he showed a strong interest in other schools displaying a critical attitude towards his own school. Our evidence points to his interest in other schools of thought, displaying knowledge of several fourth- and third-century thinkers (Dicaearchus fr. 5 = Cicero *De fin.* 4. 79):

Panaetius approved of neither the severity of their [= Stoics] opinions (*acerbitatem sententiarum*) nor the thorns of their disputations (*disserendi spinas*), and in the former he was milder (*mitior*) and in the latter more lucid (*illustrior*), and always had Plato, Aristotle, Xenocrates, Theophrastus, and Dicaearchus on his lips (*semperque in ore habuit*), as his own writings show (*ut ipsius scripta declarant*). And these men especially I strongly recommend you to study attentively and diligently.⁴⁴

A case like Panaetius shows how beyond the early Hellenistic period, significant thinkers in different schools remained aware of, and interested in, the ideas of other schools. In addition, syncretistic tendencies also increased in several schools, so that it is no surprise if they came to view other schools sympathetically which could result in a more detached view regarding their own school, as Cicero here points out. Finally, these interactions influenced the language of the discourse, showing how debate on the same issues led to cross-overs of terminology and concepts.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have raised the issue of internal tensions in the Peripatetic tradition in order to provoke further thought about what it means to say that there was such a thing as a Peripatetic school. Not only is posing this problem justified in the light of new scholarly work, but it is sometimes forgotten that Peripatetics could be active outside the school (Brink 1940, 916), which makes it even harder to determine who was a ‘real’ Peripatetic (Schorn 2003). But the basic paradox I wanted to focus on was this: can we determine whether there was ideological or philosophical coherence among Peripatetics, while at the same time scholars and associates of the school criticised the master’s ideas on fundamental points? It may well be that the question has arisen as soon as one attempts to synthesise material across several centuries. The notion of a ‘school’

Nonetheless, it is not unreasonable to try and make sense of the evidence which seems to produce a rather paradoxical picture of the Peripatetic intellectual heritage. Perhaps those who considered themselves members of the school understood well enough what they shared in doctrine and life perspective, so that it did not require articulating. And the return to the writings of Aristotle in the first century BCE probably also revived the question of a supposed coherence of his philosophy. But it is also clear that the period from Theophrastus down to Andronicus saw some of the most radical shifts in direction. The ongoing connection with the school founder depended as much on the doctrines (at least how they *remembered* them—the works were probably not much read after Strato) as they did on the ‘elaborations’ and ‘corrective improvements’ they offered themselves. The latter category may have led to a multitude of different directions in study, which seems to have made an attempt at orthodoxy problematic.

From the case studies presented we may perhaps infer two or three insights with regard to the relationship between school founder (a true polymath) and those who came after him (whether we call them students, associates, avowed followers, or enthusiasts). *Firstly*, the corrective tendency in the early years seems to be of a mild character and can probably best be described as expansive refinement. The reason for its mild character may perhaps be explained by their closeness to the master.⁴⁵ *Secondly*, it has become clear that Falcon’s suggestion, that Xenarchus’ disagreement (case study 5) fell mostly in the area of physics, was confirmed by the other examples (case studies 1–4). Whether this was caused by the post-classical trends in physics or because Aristotle’s system was in fact deeply controversial cannot be answered here (see Falcon 2012). And *thirdly*, the different periods distinguished at the start give at least a framing narrative from which we can reconsider the question to what extent the criticisms of Aristotle’s ideas reflect the new intellectual contexts in which the work was now being studied.

It is tempting to see the continuous (and in some periods increasing) level of criticism as inversely proportionate to the distance in time between critic and Aristotle. But there is also something to be said for the view that the varying responses to a body of work gave rise to the familiar problems that accompany the reading of such complex writings (by now regarded as a canon), whether by self-declared Peripatetics or those who took a specific non-partisan interest in the scholar’s ideas.

It has become clear, then, that there existed no absolute doctrinal uniformity

in the school, not at any given time nor when we look across several centuries. The core concepts that may have unified the early generations belonged mostly to physics, ethics, and metaphysics (four causes, hylomorphism, *eudaimonia*, principles, potentiality and actuality, valid reasoning, and method). The surviving evidence points to a shift in focus to literature, rhetoric, and biography, though ethics remains on the agenda. The question remains therefore how such ‘core concepts’ in traditional areas could be taken for granted implicitly, since they seem rather at odds with the new trends.

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In [Chapter 6](#) I will revisit this point of core doctrines (‘orthodoxy’) from a different angle and ask how Athenian philosophers perceived the Peripatos. I will also ask what onlookers thought of those who changed from one school to the other. Such ‘conversion stories’ can be found frequently and they suggest that the nature of one’s allegiance to a ‘school of thought’ was not as absolute and definitive as one might think. Presumably by associating the doctrine with the founder (one individual), one easily gets the impression that there is one singular doctrine among his followers. We have seen that this kind of assumption does not stand up to scrutiny. An additional question relevant in this context concerns the tension between philosophical creativity and innovation on the one hand, and the notion of core teachings and canonisation on the other. I have suggested that this requires certain conditions, including the material prerequisite of a written body of writings which can function as a canon in the strong sense, a greater distance to the school founder, and a clear understanding of the particular criterion under which the individual was regarded a Peripatetic.⁴⁶

Notes

- 1 In this chapter I present a review of work in progress, from Baltussen 2014a, 2014b, Baltussen forthcoming.
- 2 *De optimo medico* 69, 15–23. Galen also insists that this requires training in demonstrative science. On this passage see also Mansfeld 1994, 168.
- 3 Above [Chapter 1](#), p. 15.
- 4 The problematic issue [see [Chapter 1](#), p. 7] of how to draw the line between a *history* of the Peripatetic tradition as such, and a history of the *reception* of Aristotle, the latter being arguably much wider, will also be revisited in the next chapter. (Bob Sharples raised this point in personal communication, which he said would often ‘come up in his own work or rather, in the comments of referees on it’).
- 5 See [Chapter 3](#). Strictly speaking, the title of Theophrastus’ work was not *Metaphysics*, but *On First Principles* (Gutas 2010). Another example is fr. 694 FHSG.
- 6 We know it is Theophrastus’ work because a scribe gives his name.
- 7 Gutas 2010, 5 referring to the analysis of Frede 1971, who first established this point. Cf.

Reale 1980.

- 8 Sharples 2010b, viii: ‘Aristotelian’ can mean ‘of Aristotle’ as well as ‘derived from, resembling Aristotle’.
 - 9 Barnes 2007, 547.
 - 10 Brink 1940, 917, Steinmetz 1964, Gottschalk 1987.
 - 11 The ‘rediscovery’ implies that the school experienced a slump during the late third and early second centuries (Sharples 2010a: ch. 2), but in Chapters 2–4 I have attempted to mitigate this judgement somewhat.
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- 12 Moraux 1973–2000, I, 45 (although he does not exclude an earlier date in the first century BCE).
 - 13 Sedley 1999, 113–116.
 - 14 Bastianini and Sedley 1995.
 - 15 Moraux 1973–2000, I, 45 ff.
 - 16 Sharples p. 35.
 - 17 See Baltussen 2015a, 178.
 - 18 For his full output one might consult D. L. 5.43–48 and [Chapter 1](#), p. 6.
 - 19 Morison 2002, 4.
 - 20 Morison, *op. cit.*, 1. Morison bravely defends the position.
 - 21 Sorabji 1988: 186–7, who emphasises that Aristotle does not state this explicitly; cf. 2010 [1992]: 56.
 - 22 Full discussion in Sorabji 1992.
 - 23 In what follows I use the account in Gatzemeier 1970 as a basis.
 - 24 Note *automaton* in fr. 35, for which see Berryman 2003, 364.
 - 25 Mayhew in Stork (forthcoming).
 - 26 His work on syllogisms seems to have been elaborative rather than corrective (cf. fr. 41A Stork). For other examples e.g. fr. 33C Stork (= Theophr. 102C FHSG); 34C Stork (= Theophr. 103C FHSG); *35 Stork [Averroes *Questions* 5] (= Theophr. 105 FHSG); 36A Stork (= Theophr. 106AC FHSG); 36B Stork (= Theophr. 106D FHSG); 36FH Stork, etc.
 - 27 See Sharples 1987, 1196 and [Chapter 1](#), p. 13.
 - 28 See Suda s.v. Dicaearchus (fr. 2); not in DL 5.
 - 29 The dispute, according to Caston, is ‘about mental causation, not monism’ (Caston 2001, 182). Cf. 184: Aristotle will object to *harmonia*, as tuned instruments do not affect anything *in virtue of* tuning. But he does think that the mental is non-redundant, i.e., physical powers alone do not suffice.
 - 30 Reydam-Schils 2006, 183 with n.
 - 31 Hankinson (BICS 2002–3; noted in Falcon 21n) calls him as an ‘unorthodox Peripatetic’, to characterise Xenarchus’ deviation from Aristotle’s doctrine.
 - 32 Falcon 2012, 1; cf. id. 2013, 91.
 - 33 Strabo 14.5.4; cf. Julian *Orat.* 5.162, Simpl. *in De cael.* 1; Hankinson 2002–3.
 - 34 These arguments possibly go back to Plotinus *Enn.* II 1.2.12–13.
 - 35 For Ptolemy’s later criticism of Aristoxenus’ theory, see Barker 2000, ch. 6.

- 36 Sharples 2010a, 142; cf. von Arnim 1922, ‘Kritolaos’ (3).
- 37 This section makes use of a relevant part of Baltussen forthcoming.
- 38 Frede 2013.
- 39 Sharples 2010a, 155.
- 40 Sharples 2010a, 158.
- 41 Caston 2012, 2–3.
- 42 Mansfeld 1994, 155–61.
- 43 Falcon 2012, 17–21.
- 44 Cf. fr. 56 FHSG; Panaetius fr. 55 van Straaten.
- 45 Cf. Sedley 1997 on philosophical allegiance.
- 46 Gatzemeier 1970, 146 with n.: on the need for members to ‘toe the party line’ (?), see H. Dörrie, rev. of Merlan, *Philosophische Rundschau* 3 [1955], 18; Cicero *Lucullus* 4–11; O. Regenbogen, *Kleine Schriften* 1961, 280–1 and Sedley 1999.

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- Stork = edition of Eudemus fragments (RUSCH, forthcoming).

6 Intellectual context

Rivals and devotees

Introduction

In the foregoing chapters the focus has been on the Peripatetics with a view to considering them as a self-contained tradition. While our narrow perspective assisted us in teasing out the doctrinal positions internal to the school, it largely ignored their relationship with the intellectual environment of the day. It would, however, be foolish to pretend that they existed in an intellectual ‘vacuum’, which is why this chapter aims to counter-balance such a myopic perspective by considering the interaction between Peripatetics and thinkers from other schools of thought. After all, ‘No philosophical school is an island’.¹

The philosophical schools of the Hellenistic period were well aware of each other and reacted to ideas and theories put forward on a regular basis. In fact, the polemical discourse was a very common aspect of Hellenistic schools, especially in the Epicurean school, as has been argued recently.² Polemic intensified soon after 300 BCE, when Zeno left his Cynic teacher and started his own teaching activities in the shaded walkway or porch, and thus arose the new philosophy of the *Stoikoi*, those who frequented the Painted Porch (*stoa poikilê*, DL 7. 5).³ Epicurus also started his teaching not long before this date (according to DL 9. 1 he gathered some students in Colophon [Asia Minor] and ‘returned to Athens under the archonship of Anaxicrates’, i.e. 307–306 BCE). He himself had a reputation for slandering his opponents (‘Epicurus used to call this Nausiphanes jelly-fish, an illiterate, a fraud, and a trollop’, DL 10. 8; more below). It is good to remember that when Aristotelian doctrine had only just settled in, other schools of thought sprang up in Athens. This comment is not to suggest that they all arose as a *response* to Aristotelian doctrine, but some of their views certainly did. These intellectual rivals challenged many aspects of Aristotelian philosophy. How would it stand up to scrutiny and criticism?

Fierce debate between the different schools soon became a crucial part of the intellectual discourse. By reacting to each other's ideas and criticisms, Platonist, Peripatetics, Stoics, Cynics, and Epicureans not only vied for attention from their potential audience (i.e., paying students and sponsors), but they also competed for philosophical primacy in 'selling' a way of life that they considered preferable. As a result, the range of ideas circulating would influence the nature of the topics pursued, setting new agendas for exploration and analysis. A few quick examples may clarify the nature of such cross-pollinations: (a) the third Peripatetic scholar, Strato, advocated elemental motion in physics, a view which bears some passing resemblance to Democritus' and Epicurus' theory of matter; (b) in ethics we may point to Lyco's definition of life's goal (*telos*) as one that included pleasure, since it was envisioned in opposition to the Stoics, who emphasised rationality and judgment⁴; (c) by the first century BCE, when Lucretius wrote his long scientific poem *De Rerum Natura* extolling Epicurean philosophy, the influence of Theophrastus was still detectable.⁵ Stoic influence was also noticeable in both the Academy and the Lyceum, continuing on into the next centuries, as is clear in authors such as Ptolemy, Galen, and Aristocles of Messene.⁶ Several polemical titles aimed at individual Stoics or Academics in the book lists also testify to the lively debates in Athens, with works such as *Against the Academics* (DL 5. 49), *Against Kleanthes* [the Stoic] (DL 7. 163⁷), and 'five volumes against Hieronymus [which] they say are not revised' (Hieronymus fr. 24 = Philod. *History of Stoics*, in *PHerc* 1018 col. 48 Dorandi, found at the end of the list of works by Zeno of Tarsus). While interactions need not always be adversarial or polemical—concepts and ideas can be adopted and adapted (and arise independently)—much of the discourse was reactive, polemical, and *ad hominem*. We will return to this point later.

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The primary aim of this chapter is to offer a selective account of such interactions between the Peripatetics and their rivals in order to extract some insights from different types of evidence (direct, indirect, and 'circumstantial') about the school's impact and continuity. This is a complex matter, often not covered in standard accounts of the school, but one worth exploring, because it will illustrate how the intellectual ferment of the period contributed much to the direction and resolution of philosophical issues. Several questions are pertinent here: how were debates framed by the language and concepts of the different schools? How did disagreement between rivals drive the debate and understanding of philosophical issues forward? And how can our own understanding of the Peripatetic positions benefit from this kind of contextualised analysis? We know, for instance, that Aristotle's logic and some parts of his scientific work were used by Chrysippus, who developed a new

type of logic distinct from Aristotle's.⁸ Clearly Aristotle was important enough to be attacked by several thinkers, as was shown by Sandbach.⁹ Clearly Plato and Aristotle had set the agenda for philosophical discourse, the latter in particular for the kind of distinct areas ('disciplines', *epistêmai*) one could focus on, and what kind of questions one should ask; my analysis, then, will pay special attention to how the new schools challenged these ideas in creative ways and how Aristotelians responded.

It will be convenient to focus broadly on the Hellenistic period, i.e. from Theophrastus (late fourth century) down to Xenarchus (late first century BCE), for three reasons: firstly, the surviving evidence shows different forms of influence in the debates on certain philosophical problems; second, interactions with other schools have influenced both the transmission of materials and the ancient and modern reputation of the school; and third, evidence for the period after Xenarchus is too slender to be helpful. I will first sketch the important culture of debate in oral and written form, after which I will review a number of challenges to Aristotelian doctrine in separate sections, which focus on those areas which were central to Hellenistic philosophy: physics, epistemology, ethics, and psychology. The chapter concludes with a short section on the more vicious personal attacks that some had to suffer—an *ad hominem* approach to polemic.

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A culture of debate and polemic

Our evidence for the ongoing disputes in the Hellenistic era illustrates how much the use of (technical) language, choice of concepts, and the focus on certain topics over others was determined by the polemical cut-and-thrust of philosophical argument. Aristotle had set a clear agenda in the three main areas of philosophy: in physics with his notions of matter and form (dubbed *hylomorphism* in the eighteenth century¹⁰), potentiality (*dunamis*) and actuality (*energeia*), and the insistence on causes and principles as the explanatory starting points for responsible philosophical activity; in ethics by pioneering a grand vision of virtue, human behaviour, and the ultimate goal of life (*eudaimonia*), and applying some of his epistemological principles to the process of deliberation and intellectual virtues (*EN* 6. 5–8; 12); and in politics with his far-reaching conclusions on the best political form based on his research into city states. Obviously all this owed much to Plato, but Aristotle's organisation of knowledge was more explicitly systematic and more ambitiously comprehensive. In short, his work not only proved fundamental, but set important parameters for the next generations of philosophers and those in later ages in these areas of research. The diversity of his explorations also meant

that he did not exhaust all possible questions or all possible answers. Consequently, both within and without the Peripatos many undertook to challenge the system, or fill any perceived gaps. Aristotle created a philosophically coherent system, but it was clearly not complete.¹¹

Responses to other schools had been made orally, but writing also became an important part of philosophical activity from the mid fourth century BCE. Although Plato had protested that writing was damaging for creative thought and memory, this emphatic complaint (recorded in writing!) was testimony to the irrepressible advance of written communication. Aristotle was clearly a studious and more ‘bookish’ person, recording his original ideas and criticisms of others in writing.¹² According to one biographical source, Plato apparently nicknamed Aristotle ‘the Reader’ (*Vita Marciana* 6; cf. Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 1.3a–b). As we saw, Aristotle already wrote critically about all his predecessors, in particular on Plato’s ideas (e.g. *Metaph.* 1.10). But once additional schools were founded, we see a striking proliferation in the literary production taking place, which also reflects the intense disputes between philosophical schools.

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Our meagre evidence would be even thinner had not all philosophers taken up the pen and filled as many book rolls as they did. The antecedents of this scholarly activity resided in the fourth century BCE and fortunately Diogenes Laertius provides lavish evidence for it. Among the Academics, Arcesilaus was called a ‘lover of study’ (DL 4. 30), and Krantor is said to have written ‘notebooks’ (*hypomnēmata*, 3. 24) as did Xenocrates (4. 13).¹³ Krantor ‘left commentaries of up to 30,000 lines’ (4. 24), which may have been edited by Arcesilaus who himself did not write anything—clearly an exceptional case, even if the comment alludes to a Socratic style of philosophy (4. 32).

In the Peripatos and the Stoa, many titles testify to polemical works (easily identified by the preposition *pros* ‘against’, ‘in response to’). We find titles of Peripatetic books such as ‘against the claims of Melissus’, ‘against Alcmaeon’, ‘against the Pythagoreans’, ‘against Gorgias’, ‘against the claims of Xenophanes’, and ‘against Zeno’ (DL 5. 25), while Heracleides wrote several works of Homeric exegesis (DL 5. 87) and polemicised against Democritus (5. 88) and Zeno (5. 87). The Stoics also participated in this kind of polemic: Cleanthes wrote several interpretive or polemical works (7. 174, ‘against Democritus, Aristarchus, Herillus’). Chrysippus seems to have busied himself with writing surveys of particular views (7. 187 ‘treatise on ancient physicists’; 7. 189 ‘books with the most widely accepted views’).

Epicurus was also very active in his writing, since he is described as ‘highly

prolific and beating all in the *amount* of books [written]' (DL 10. 26); he also wrote against the physicists (10. 27), while his followers Metrodorus wrote a work 'against Democritus' and Hermarchus a work entitled 'against Plato' (DL 10. 24–5).¹⁴

Out of this bustling activity of polemic and criticism arose an atmosphere of one-upmanship in literary production: according to Carneades, Chrysippus was trying to outdo Epicurus in literary output (DL 10. 26, *ezêlou . . . en polygraphiai*). Some of the new schools in fact started as a critical response to the ideas of their own master, as in the case of Aristotle who left Plato to start his own school. Such a move again raises the question of internal loyalty and philosophical allegiance. Our sources about the different schools (several terms apply: *diatribai*, *scholai*, *haireseis*) and their adherents include many references to individuals changing school. The Platonist Arcesilaus, who is mentioned in Strato's will (DL 5. 61; 63), went from being a student of Theophrastus to 'crossing over' to Plato (DL 4. 29); Theophrastus himself studied with Plato first, then with Aristotle (DL 5. 36), but also wrote a 'response to those from the Academy', which most likely means a critical response (as the list of his books attests, DL 5. 49 *pros tous ex Akadêmeias a*). Both are later said to have 'destabilised Plato's Forms' (Aristotle) or 'shattered more violently the authority of the early Academy' (Theophrastus).¹⁵ Metrocles, a student of Theophrastus, changed over to Cynicism, after he had an 'embarrassing moment' during a speech (he has to relieve himself) and Crates the Cynic persuaded him not to starve himself to death (DL 6. 94–5). Aristo and Cratippus 'converted' from the Old Academy to the Peripatos (Philodemus, *Index Academicus* xxxv 10–16). Heraclides started training with the Platonist Speusippus before moving on to Aristotle (DL 5. 86). The Epicureans apparently formed an exception to this kind of mobility in that their commitment was permanent: in the life of the Platonist Arcesilaus we read that they were known for remaining in the Epicurean school once they had entered (DL 4. 43). When asked why this was the case, Arcesilaus dryly commented 'because men may become eunuchs, but eunuchs can never become a man' (*ibid.*). As late as the fourth century CE Philostratus reports a case in which Aristocles of Pergamon (150–180 CE) becomes an orator (sophist) after spending his youth as a student of Peripatetic philosophy: 'Aristocles . . . belonged to a family of consular rank, and though from boyhood to early manhood he had devoted himself to the teachings of the Peripatetic school, he went over entirely to the sophists' (*Lives* ii. 2, 566).

Membership of a philosophical school in antiquity was a matter of choice (the word for 'school', *hairesis*, means precisely that), even if some 'schools' can also be considered religious communities of sorts, as we saw in the case of Plato

and Aristotle, who chose a gathering place dedicated to a local hero figure. For a modern audience this is not easy to understand, but it is worthwhile considering for a moment what kind of commitment and level of loyalty was involved when one joined Plato's or Aristotle's circle (Sedley 1999). Often one joined a teacher who impressed by their knowledge or intellect, but this did not imply that one had to agree with everything they said. Disagreement could lead to changing allegiance or starting one's own 'school'.

Did this mean that someone leaving one school for another school was considered a 'traitor to the cause' or a kind of 'defector'? Such an interpretation would impose too much of a modern way of thinking. This has not kept modern scholars from claiming that there are examples where a negative judgment could hold: Antiochus, head of the Platonic Academy, who initiated an amalgamation of Platonic, Aristotelian, and especially Stoic ideas, was recently described as 'a defector, an ally of the school he had tried so resourcefully to conquer'.¹⁶ We should not forget, however, that an interest in, or allegiance to, a certain philosophical way of thinking is not quite the same as life-long loyalty (whether this resembled a club or even a religious group). If Sharples (2010) is right in suggesting that the Peripatetics have a less distinctive 'way of life' than the other schools, this makes a difference to the loyalty issue. Their supposed broad agenda (along the same lines as Aristotle) could explain this, since it could mean that they did not yet have a clear orthodoxy (what we might call *Aristotelianism*) to defend.¹⁷ The evidence does not quite confirm this, except that we know of two who might have had such a broad agenda: as we saw, DL mentions Theophrastus and Demetrius as potential polymaths in the school (Chapter 1, p. 6). Furthermore, we cannot exclude the possibility that Aristotle's works were not widely available, even if there are good arguments to assume that the second generation knew his ideas well and probably had copies of (some of) his works.

Whilst caution is still required regarding the evidence for interactions with other schools, the traces of action and reaction become evident in the philosophical problems, questions, and answers we find. In some cases the best way to find these traces is to consider why certain questions are raised in preference over others. Contextual factors and contemporary debates often determined what philosophers would focus on. For instance, the emphasis on our knowledge of the world—how we acquire it, what it consists of, and how reliable it is—became a dominant and influential topic of debate in the Hellenistic period, in particular in the Academy under Arcesilaus. This debate tended to question the reliability of human knowledge. As we will see, the Aristotelian doctrine came under attack by other schools, who questioned his epistemological optimism.

What the Athenian philosophers argued (and quibbled) about can be gathered from evidence in the three main areas of Hellenistic philosophy: physics, logic, and ethics. By selecting a number of ‘polemical moments’ which contain challenges to Aristotelian ideas, we can grasp how Aristotle’s ideas influenced other thinkers outside his school. Though speculative, these flashpoints assist in building up a broader picture of the philosophical discourse in the Hellenistic period. Within the scope of this short book it will not be possible to discuss all the problems connected to the sources or the precise knowledge later thinkers had of the Aristotelian corpus: we have to assume that his ideas were sufficiently known in many cases where the comments clearly presuppose them.¹⁸

We should examine the main areas in greater detail, so we can establish how such interactions took shape. In this chapter I will review responses and challenges to Aristotelian (1) physics, (2) epistemology, (3) ethics (and politics). A fourth section will deal with (4) psychology. To close the chapter, a brief look at polemics *ad hominem* will illustrate the passionate and sometimes personal nature of the exchanges between philosophers.

(1) Responses and challenges to Aristotelian physics and physiology

Critical reactions to an Aristotelian account of nature (*physika*) took shape in the Stoic and Epicurean schools, although Aristotle’s successors also expressed disagreements with Plato’s natural philosophy in their writings (Plutarch, *Against Colotes* 1115A). The reasons for their disagreement often arose from the fact that they gave a different priority to one of the three main areas within their overall system of thought. While all agreed that ethics, physics, and logic were core areas of philosophy with important principles, Aristotle covered all three without articulating a strong preference for one of them.

As we saw in previous chapters, Aristotle argued for a moral system in which human happiness (*eudaimonia*, ‘thriving’) is based on virtue ethics with a controversial concession regarding material goods (*EN* 1.8), a physical system which turned on the notion of essentialism (substances, *ousiai*) and qualitative change, and a logical (and metaphysical) system which had the categories and syllogism at its core. In each area a specific idea underpinned the structure: his physics did not rely on pure materialism but used matter-plus-form (*hylomorphism*¹⁹); his ethics was not overly idealistic but largely pragmatic; and his theory of reasoning had tried to cover all elements of linguistic and logical expression (i.e. word, sentence, and syllogism), and mapped dialectical, rhetorical, and scientific applications. These areas and concepts formed the ‘scaffolding’ for many debates in the Hellenistic era.

Aristotle ended his *Physics* with a discussion of how the universe is kept in existence and in motion. It is the culmination of his account of nature's components, causes, and outcomes (*Phys.* 8). In part this proposal responded to Plato, who in his *Timaeus* had opted for a 'creator-craftsman' (*dēmiourgos*) who brought the universe into being and built sustaining powers into it (*Tim.* 36E–37D). Next generations puzzled over what it all meant and what the implications were. Was the universe divine? Was there *conscious* design in nature? Could the universe be destroyed? In one late source we learn that 'Theophrastus regarded the heavens, at any rate, as divine' (Proclus, *Commentary on the Timaeus*, vol. 2, 122.10–17 Diehl). Responses in other quarters also took sides in this debate: apparently Epicurus 'sided with Aristotle against Plato and the Stoics in denying *conscious* design in nature'.²⁰

The indestructibility of the *kosmos* (ordered world) was one of Aristotle's firm convictions. Another way to consider the problem was to ask whether the world would exist for all eternity. Aristotle had rejected Plato's view that the world is perishable in his *On the Heavens* 1.10–12. He argued that the ordered world has always existed and will always exist in more or less the same form that it does now. Moreover, he thought this was no accident: the cosmos is *incapable* of coming into being or perishing. The Stoic response to Aristotle included an attack on his cosmology, especially the notion that the present cosmic order must endure forever. The Stoics supposed that the cosmic order was subject to periodic episodes in which everything became fire and then all the elements were born again from this 'conflagration'. Theophrastus responded to the Stoic Zeno (and perhaps Epicurus) on this point. We know that he produced a substantial refutation which survives in a long fragment in Philo's *On the Eternity of the World* 23.117–27.149 (= fr. 184 FHSG).²¹ In four counter-arguments Theophrastus argued with some vigour that Zeno's position is unacceptable, thus reaffirming Aristotle's position on the eternity of the world order.

The Stoics challenged Aristotle's physics in other ways, too. While their philosophy considered the interconnection between physics, ethics, and logic as very important (p. 81 above), they made ethics central to their teachings, and the other two areas subservient to ethics (cf. ch. 4, p. 82). Because Zeno held that the correct attitude in life (including moral stance) was expressed as 'living according to nature' (DL 7. 87 = LS 63C), a proper understanding of nature was essential to guide us in our choices. Stoic physics also adopted a materialist position, arguing that non-physical entities could not have an impact on anything (cf. below, p. 145). On such a basis both body and soul (mind) need to be physical. Such a view stands in clear contrast to the views of Plato (who posited an immortal, non-physical soul) and Aristotle (according to whom soul

Even in science and medicine Aristotelian ideas had various inroads. In the Hellenistic era medicine and other emerging sciences were taking on a life independent of philosophy. Although broad empirical science in the Peripatos had probably ended with Theophrastus, Aristotelian knowledge did influence certain areas of science. Hellenistic doctors had been given opportunities to experiment on the human body, discovering new evidence about anatomy and body parts which Aristotle could not have known about (dissection was taboo in his days). But that did not mean they rejected all established knowledge. For instance, the Alexandrian physician Erasistratus (ca. 300–ca. 250 BCE) described the heart valves, and declared that arteries contained ‘air’ (*pneuma*). Is it a coincidence that *pneuma* also played a role in Aristotle’s theory of human biology? He had declared it the mobile air which transmits motion and sensation via the sperm (GA 2.2, 735a1–21; see also p. 146).²² The matter was considered important and controversial, for Erasistratus’ teacher Praxagoras had a different view about the role of *pneuma*: he had distinguished between veins and arteries (unlike Aristotle), and claimed that veins contained blood (and arteries *pneuma*), putting an end to both Aristotle’s and Erasistratus’ influence on these points, at least in medical circles.

In the early Roman Empire one important medical authority showed a keen interest in the Aristotelian scientific method. (By now of course the works had been rediscovered and circulated since the late first century BCE.) The philosopher-physician Galen of Pergamum (126–216 CE) lived during the so-called second sophistic, a period of literary ferment and nostalgia, in which classical Athens and Attic Greek became exemplars for intellectual pursuits. He prided himself on being a philosopher as well as a physician in true Aristotelian style.²³

(2) Responses and challenges to Aristotelian epistemology

Aristotle’s important contributions to the theory of knowledge included deductive reasoning and accepting careful observation as a basis for reasoning about the world. However, his theory was anything but complete. Rather it offered a framework which needed considerable development and refinement.

What could have led to the questioning of Aristotle’s epistemology, and on a fundamental level at that? We already touched on this question briefly in the chapter on language and logic (Chapter 3). It would seem that the question ‘is

knowledge really possible?' was approached afresh in opposition to the rather optimistic belief of the Peripatetic school that secure knowledge was perfectly possible. The ensuing debate impacted on the perspective the Peripatetics had inherited from Aristotle.²⁴ All new Hellenistic schools, the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Sceptics, raised important issues in this area, and while the central debate was between Stoics and Sceptics, we know of several points that raised problems for Aristotle's theory.

Aristotle had always assumed that access to knowledge was in principle possible for us, because his account of sense perception presented sense organ and object as conveniently attuned to each other (a kind of compatibility principle), so that a grasp of their proper objects, colour by the eye, odours by the sense of smell, and so on (e.g. *De sensu* 436b16–20) would lead to a reliable understanding of the external world. The way that the eye worked was analogous to how he envisaged the intellect to work: both sense organ and intellect take on the form of their respective object, which they can because they are potentially identical to it. So the compatibility principle as applied to the senses, plus the strong parallel between sensing and intellection, yields an optimistic account not merely of our ability to sense the world accurately, but also to understand it. Theophrastus seems to have accepted the main positions, building his own account on the foundation of these principles of compatibility and transparency.²⁵

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Theophrastus and Aristotle's optimistic attitude towards both perception and knowledge was modified by the Stoics and Epicureans who were, in turn, responding to the Sceptics' attacks on both. The Stoics advocated a theory of perception that involved a much more active perceiver. We naturally have perceptual episodes that are entirely accurate, though there are other episodes that are not. So they agreed with a restricted version of the compatibility principle, but they thought that it takes a very special skill to reliably recognise these 'clear and distinct' perceptions. Scientific knowledge (*epistêmê*) involves the ability to do this consistently without ever making mistakes. They were much more pessimistic than Aristotle about how frequently human beings manage to possess this skill and thus to have scientific knowledge.²⁶

The Epicureans also put strong qualifiers in place, but chose a different solution, for instance, by accepting the difficulty of interpreting certain phenomenal experiences: optical illusions challenge us to examine our inferences from sense impressions, to differentiate between apparent and real (underlying) state of affairs; e.g. a stick *looks* bent in water, but *is* still straight (Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 4. 438–42). Their strategy was to accept both perceptions as true, that is, we really see a bent stick in the water, but to

warn us that this sense impression (bent-stick-in-the-water) does not represent the stick itself in its true nature, only in its contingent situation of being partially in water. They would suggest that the Peripatetic view was too simplistic, because it could not explain this difference between single and complex sense impressions. The Sceptics, however, questioned the possibility of having reliable knowledge at all, and retrenched into a position that encouraged withholding judgment (*epokhê*) and entertaining provisional beliefs about the world.

All three schools thus raised serious objections to the Aristotelian representational theory, the first two by attacking his reasoning, the third by questioning his fundamental assumption of the possibility of reliable or true knowledge. The three rival schools problematised the general assumption that knowledge of the world is straightforward and possible in the way that it was presented by Aristotle. Even Theophrastus seems to have been influenced by such concerns.²⁷ His meticulous studies of sense perception exhibit a cautious streak, and he raises all kinds of difficulties which express doubts about the attainability of secure and comprehensive knowledge. But it would go too far to consider him a Sceptic as some do.²⁸ We should acknowledge that this attitude betrays a kind of resignation in accepting certain limits to human comprehension (Regenbogen 1940, 1554). His doubts nonetheless led him to a cautious attitude towards empirical knowledge (*De sensibus* 60, similar statements in his *Causes of Plants* 6.1–2, *On Odours* 5, 66²⁹).

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Gottschalk has argued that there is some evidence to think that Hellenistic Peripatetics attempted to update their epistemology under the influence of contemporary debates—a plausible suggestion.³⁰ He points especially to the account of Sextus Empiricus, whose sceptical allegiance is responsible for his attempt to review and refute all so-called ‘dogmatics’ (Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics, Epicureans). The central discussion of how mental concepts are constructed reveals the Stoic influence in the colouring of the contemporaneous vocabulary and parallels to Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* and the *Metaphysics* (to a lesser extent). But the opening and closing sections in Sextus, so Gottschalk argues, have a different origin. Sextus’ discussion of the so-called criterion of an elusive measure for true knowledge—is out of place: one might with some effort extrapolate traces of a reliable measure of truth (‘criterion’) in Aristotle, but it is not a doctrine of this concept. Theophrastus’ notion of ‘the self-evident’ (*to enarges*) is different and may go some way towards such a criterion (301A FHSG). Therefore we can be sure that the criterion could not possibly be Aristotelian, nor could it really be Theophrastean.³¹ The most likely explanation is that Sextus’ claims in this discussion must represent Hellenistic ‘modernisations’.

Cicero seems to confirm the terminological shift. Starting from Aristotle's better known premises in a syllogism, Cicero discussed both Aristotle and Theophrastus in the context of reviewing Stoic logic (*De fin.* 4). In his summary statement he uses the Latin words *caput* ('main point') and *perspicua* ('very clear') which are most likely the equivalents of the Greek terms *archê* ('principle') and *to enarges* ('the self-evident'). They refer no doubt to the doctrine that 'first premises of demonstrative syllogisms must be undemonstrated, primary and, as such, better known' (Gottschalk 2004, 385).

There is good reason to discuss the responses to the *Categories* here. This work, as we saw in [Chapter 3](#), was a crucial part of Aristotle's logic and one of his favourite tools to resolve logical puzzles. In the work, metaphysics and logic vie for dominance: both contribute to a better understanding of things and concepts. As such it is relevant to his epistemology. We are much better informed about certain later responses to the *Categories*, after Andronicus had rediscovered them and given them renewed exposure.³² A contemporary Platonist Eudorus with Pythagorean leanings also showed great interest. His comments seem to support reading the ten categories as allowing for a division into two main groups: the absolute and the relative (e.g. *Simpl. Commentary on Physics* 181,7–30), a division considered Pythagorean orthodoxy and standard among Platonists (ch. 3, p. 59 [Sedley 1999]).

Two shadowy critics of the *Categories* appear in Simplicius' commentary. Lucius and Nicostratus attack the work as an unsatisfactory analysis of ontological problems.³³ Since there are no other sources outside Simplicius that refer to these two individuals, we cannot be sure when they lived. Griffin makes a persuasive case that they play different roles in the work: Lucius featured only in the discussion of Substance, Quality, and Quantity (Griffin 2015, 105) and it is striking that Boethus responded to the views of Lucius (which most likely places him in the first century BCE). Nicostratus postdates Boethus and is referred to across the whole commentary of Simplicius. The objections they brought against Aristotle concern style, rhetoric, and textual inconsistency, in particular claiming that the definitions of homonymy, synonyms, and paronymy are not precise or even that they are self-contradictory.³⁴ Interestingly, Simplicius also reports on those thinkers who responded to these objections (e.g. Porphyry vs. Nicostratus). Given that Lucius and Nicostratus both posed mere puzzles and questions (according to Simplicius), their treatment of the *Categories* is rather inconclusive. But it is clear that engagement with the little work drew attention from different quarters.

and the pursuit of the truth, he made a serious study of the Stoics and Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Eudemus (*On my own books* 39–40; trans. P. N. Singer):

So I applied myself to all the best-reputed Stoics and Peripatetic philosophers of the time; but while I learned many pieces of logical theory from them which in the fullness of time I found quite useless for establishing proofs, there were very few that they had researched in any useful manner likely to lead them to the goal they had set before them. I found, additionally, that these pieces of logical theory were in fact in conflict with each other, while some were in conflict with our most basic intuitions.

Galen's usual acrimonious style contains some exaggeration, but when he goes on to discuss the elaborate notes (or 'commentaries', *hupomnēmata*) which he wrote on Peripatetic works, mostly for his own use, it is clear that he is not bluffing (ibid. 41–2): 'three volumes of commentary on Aristotle's *On interpretation*, four on the first of his books on syllogisms and the same number on the second'.³⁵ He also mentions six volumes on Theophrastus' on *Affirmation and Denial* [= DL 5. 44], a work on Eudemus' *Speech*, and a commentary on Aristotle's *The Ten Categories* [sic]. His knowledge of Peripatetic logical works seems thus very solid.³⁶ His particular interest seems to lie in how one may discover first principles (or axioms). Using the standard distinction between perceptive and intellectual phenomena (*Meth. med.* X.36), he outlines how we should start from what is 'agreed by all men as something primary', a very Aristotelian position.³⁷ But Galen also had to be more cautious, now that more sceptical theories on the possibility of knowledge were known (Pyrrhonists). Yet he is content to use the senses and the mind as basic criteria to assess sense impressions and infer what is consistent or inconsistent.³⁸

Clearly, all his critical grumblings notwithstanding, Galen adopted a select set of scientific and epistemological ideas from Aristotle, but considered many of his empirical views ill-informed or plain wrong.³⁹ He also met up with Peripatetic thinkers in Rome around 160 CE, one by the name of Boethus, another named Eudemus (not to be confused with his namesake and student of Aristotle from Rhodes), who took the role of patron and introduced him to the emperor's court (Marcus Aurelius).⁴⁰ His selective admiration for Aristotle supplements his thorough-going Platonism and his deep commitment to Hippocrates and his medical theories. The latter two were his real intellectual heroes, but since they did not provide an elaborate scientific methodology, Galen used Aristotle to complement their insights and achievements.

Galen's insistence on the importance of logic and general philosophical training for a physician was unusual. He himself had been sampling the

doctrines of four schools, when he received his education in his home city. The striking view found in his work reveals a (partial) echo of a remark made by Aristotle, that:

those physicians who are cultivated and learned make mention of natural science, and claim to derive their principles from it, while the most accomplished investigations into nature generally push their studies so far as to conclude with an account of medical principles.

(Arist. *Parv. Nat.* 480b21–30)

Clearly the importance of a wider perspective and the link between fundamental insight in the principles of both disciplines stands out here and must have been grist to Galen's mill.

What is more, another comment often overlooked but relevant in understanding Galen's relation to Aristotle is found in the last book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.⁴¹ There the Peripatetic states in passing:

We do not see men becoming expert physicians from a study of medical handbooks (*ek tôn suggrammatôn*). Yet medical writers attempt to describe not only general courses of treatment, but also methods of cure and modes of treatment for particular sorts of patients, classified according to their various habits of body; and their treatises appear to be of value for men who have had *practical experience* (*tois empeirois*), though they are useless for the novice (*tois anepistêmosi*).

(*EN* 10.9, 1181b21 ff., Loeb transl.)

The limited value of books in relation to a practical science is especially relevant for the art of medicine.⁴² Again Galen seems to echo this sentiment here:

the best education comes about through the living voice, and one cannot become a ship's pilot or any other expert on the basis of a book. Books are aids for remembering at the disposal of those who have already learned things and possess knowledge, but do not constitute a complete education for the ignorant.

(*On the powers of foods*, VI. 480.3 ff. Kühn)

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Both authors imply that learning from books alone is rather futile because it is like learning to swim on dry land: the (theoretical) knowledge will have no point of reference in one's understanding of the actions and things described, that is, a gap will remain between the information acquired on the one hand, and one's understanding of how to apply it on the other. Aristotle's point is of course more limited in that he emphasises the aspect of the general versus the particular. Galen's favourite authors were Hippocrates, Plato, and Aristotle—in that order. He never tired of stating that his understanding was of a higher level

because he knew philosophy and was trained in logic (most of his medical colleagues apparently were not⁴³). He admired Aristotle mostly for his logical doctrine and scientific methodology, but did not shrink back from criticising him with regard to empirically obtained data. In our typology of those engaged with Aristotelian ideas (Chapter 5, pp. 110f.), Galen seems to fit that of the occasional devotee.

Other devotees can also be found, usually characterised by a less critical attitude. Many ‘scientific’ writings in the first and second centuries CE contain echoes of Aristotelian ideas, and here we seem to find several cases of philosophers who strive to emulate Aristotle in some way or another. This approach fits the age of the early empire. The Platonist philosopher and biographer Plutarch of Chaeronea (ca. 100 CE) may stand as one example. Plutarch foreshadowed the so-called Second Sophistic in the next century with its nostalgic fondness for the language (Attic) and literature (rhetoric, philosophy, and drama) of classical Athens. Many authors like Plutarch, such as Nicolaus of Damascus, Pliny the Elder, and Celsus, pursued projects of encyclopedic proportions as did Athenaeus, who displays his immense (bookish) learning in his writings (*Sophists at Dinner*). Their admiration for erudition and scholarship comes through in Athenaeus’ repeated references to the Stagirite as ‘the most learned Aristotle’.⁴⁴ All clearly took Aristotle as their example of how to conceive of a large project in a scientific subject, even if the final products were clearly embedded in their own time and cultural environment.

Plutarch’s interest in Aristotle’s ambitious writings in natural philosophy reflects his own attempt to gather and systematise human knowledge on a grand scale. Plutarch’s knowledge of Peripatetic physics has recently been studied in more detail.⁴⁵ In his *Table Talk* he reveals broad knowledge of Aristotelian topics. The work (*sumposiaka*; *Sympotic Questions*) stands in the tradition of discussions of miscellaneous problems in physics, starting with a work attributed to Aristotle, but most likely created in the Peripatos after him: the *Problēmata Physika*. Plutarch offers a telling passage in which one of the characters, Florus, is presented as a *reader* of the *Problēmata* by Aristotle; this of course presupposes that the audience would find this not unusual (*Table Talk* 8. 10).

Plutarch’s work may refer explicitly to Aristotle’s or Theophrastus’ work, or just contain allusive paraphrases.⁴⁶ Book 8 has three ‘talks’ (3, 5, 10) which are especially replete with Peripatetic materials. For instance, at 715E he alludes to the theory that wine may be hot or cold, a point the Peripatetics differed about. At 721DE one speaker in the discussion presents an argument regarding sound which is basically Peripatetic (with a possible origin in *De an.* 419–20), even if the actual definition given is not found in Aristotle in these exact words. The passage also contains the adjective *diêkhês* (an attempt to describe

‘[sound] passing through’ something), as analogous to ‘transparent’ (*diaphanês*) and ‘trans-odorant’ (*diosmon*). The term in Plutarch is not found in Aristotle, but the term does occur in the late Platonist Philoponus (*Commentary on De anima* 353,11)—it is probably a Theophrastean coinage (see [Chapter 2](#), p. 43). The passage seems to exhibit Stoic influence in its terminology (*eutonia*, *sunekheia*, also in his *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions* 1085D = *SVF* II 444).⁴⁷ Such ‘blending’ of conceptual and terminological elements was not unusual by this time. Stoic vocabulary had become somewhat of a *lingua franca* in philosophical circles. Its presence does make interpreting these texts more difficult and requires some caution. But because Plutarch is an informed reader of Stoic materials we can be sure that his grasp of their terminology is well-founded. At 732B several references to specific plants (types of mint) strongly suggest that Theophrastus’ plant studies are in the background.⁴⁸ Examples could be multiplied. Plutarch’s *Table Talk* is clearly linked to the scientific tradition which had a strong connection to the Peripatetic legacy.

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The impulse to emulation was complemented by occasional criticism of various pieces of knowledge in the encyclopedic legacy. Among the more famous intellectuals who had acquired a good knowledge of Aristotle’s ideas, Athenaeus also voiced his doubts about particular claims. In his rich and immensely learned *Sophists at Dinner* Athenaeus (fl. 190–220 CE) presents a set of questions which reveal quite detailed knowledge of Aristotle’s biological work (in this case *Investigations into Animals* = *Historia Animalium* or *HA*). But he also illustrates how one could easily debunk some claims Aristotle made about natural phenomena after scrutiny of the empirical details. For instance, one of the dinner guests asks (probably tongue-in-cheek) how Aristotle could know specific details about the lifestyle and *longevity* of a fish, thus clearly implying that this would require long-term observation at the bottom of the sea!⁴⁹ While the observations in Athenaeus are often expressed facetiously, there is a more serious point behind the question, namely, that common sense and *empirical* data can cause problems for Aristotle (or, if the claim is not his, for Aristotelians). One is reminded of Galen’s fondness for Aristotle’s scientific method, but very critical attitude about certain empirical claims regarding animal biology and anatomy (above p. 137–9). Thus we can see that sound scepticism and new empirical evidence were used from Theophrastus onwards to cast doubt on some of Aristotle’s claims. Did this mean that Aristotle was being treated badly? Hardly: he probably would have welcomed these comments as useful improvements to the grand scheme, since they were based on an approach germane to the scientific work he himself had been doing.

Close in time to these ‘occasional devotees’ we find probably the most important Aristotelian loyal to Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias (late second

century CE).⁵⁰ He is considered the grand master of the running commentary on Aristotle, and in general he is a staunch defender of the Aristotelian doctrine, which by now is considered a canon. We cannot discuss him in full within the scope of this book, but his importance for the wider trends of the school tradition can be sketched with a few main points of his interpretation of Aristotle. He attacked the Stoics on behalf of Aristotelianism, and, as we saw with others, here too terminological colouring occurs in the exchanges.⁵¹ And yet, he disagreed with Aristotle on many points in physics and other areas. He often used the Stagirite as a starting point and did his best to make it look as if his own elaborations were possible interpretations of the Stagirite's doctrines. In the theory of perception and knowledge Alexander agreed with Aristotle on the empirical basis of knowledge but adapted the notion of the universal, holding that the universals are posterior to particulars, because a universal cannot exist without the particular. Regarding the soul he was inclined to accept a perishable soul, because he saw the form of complex bodies as tied to them (Alexander, *De an.* 17.9f). But the question to ask here is whether he misread Aristotle (*De an.* 1.4, 408a24–26, as has been argued by Donini 1971). He seems to stand between Andronicus and Galen, the former undecided whether the soul-form supervened on the mixtures of the bodily elements, and the latter convinced the soul *is* the mixture of the bodily elements.⁵² His view on the intellect would seem closer to Aristotle's, since it appeals to the distinction between active and passive intellect (*De an.* 3.5). But it remains unclear 'how it operates as an agent or cause'.⁵³ (For an important issue in psychology see below.) Yet he also argued that when our intellect grasps the active intellect (i.e. the Unmoved Mover of *Metaph.* 12), it 'becomes identical with it and immortal'.⁵⁴

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Alexander's 'disagreements-as-elucidations' are examples of what a committed Peripatetic, a true devotee, would do in order to find a way of interpreting Aristotle's writings as a coherent doctrine. Given that he worked as the chair of Peripatetic philosophy in Athens, where all four major schools still had representation, he will have attempted to secure a firm position for his own school. It is possible that the notion of 'school' therefore changed, and that the issue of orthodoxy became a prime concern in his exegetical activities. Alexander's method of doing philosophy, which is so characteristic of the later commentary tradition, also seems to reinforce a quite different notion of a 'school' from what we have with the Hellenistic schools.

(3) Responses and challenges to Aristotelian ethics and politics

For Hellenistic ethics the external ‘goods’ and the emotions were the key battlegrounds. No doubt the uncertain times contributed to such a focus, given that the Macedonian empire had broken up and another long war ensued over territories and wealth. Before 323 BCE, the year of Alexander’s death (Aristotle died a year later) the main competing views were those of Plato and Aristotle, and possibly Democritus, whose list of works (DL 9. 45–48) demonstrates his considerable interests in ethics.

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We saw in [Chapter 4](#) that the Hellenistic debate centred on ‘happiness’ and the crucial notion of the *telos* (‘the end or purpose of life’)—which for Aristotle comprised virtue (excellence) as well as external goods, while the Stoics strongly opposed the inclusion of external goods. The good life (and the purpose of life—*telos*) proved a difficult concept, and as a result *telos* was defined in a number of different ways.⁵⁵ Among this multiplicity of ideas about how to achieve happiness, several constants can be identified in the debates: the goal of life, the means to reach it, the values involved, and the importance of virtue. In other words, the intellectual ‘battle lines’ were drawn around the means and the end. The evidence for Peripatetic ethical theory is unfortunately rather slender for this period. What we know about Theophrastus (late fourth century) down to Critolaus (mid second century), is preserved in passing references, brief quotations, and paraphrase.⁵⁶

Stoic responses to Aristotelian ethics centred around external goods and the emotions. Since scholars disagree how much the Stoics knew about Aristotle’s ethical writings, their interactions are not an easy topic of study. Whilst it is probably unlikely that Zeno knew the *Nicomachean Ethics* or *Eudemian Ethics* first-hand, some concepts and issues in the fragments of the first three Stoic scholars allude to Aristotle’s treatment of those same issues.⁵⁷ Against the background of Aristotle’s position that allowed one to have friends, wealth, power, children, etc. (whether necessary or useful *EN* 1. 8, 1099a31–b3) in the pursuit of a good life, the Stoics insisted that only virtue would lead to the attainment of happiness. Theophrastus’ discussion of virtue may shed some light on this debate. In fr. 449A–B FHSG (= Stobaeus, *Anthol.* 2.7.20) Theophrastus describes virtue as ‘a disposition to choose being in the mean which is relative to us, determined by reason and such as the practical man would determine it’ (close to Arist. *EN*). His subsequent classification of dispositions reminds us of Aristotle’s *EN* 2. 6 (the first systematic division), but also of the refined Stoic divisions of emotions preserved in pseudo-Andronicus (*Peri pathôn* 223. 12–19), where the minutiae of the four main emotions and their specific instantiations are listed. We may also ask whether a testimonium in pseudo-Plutarch (*On Desire and Grief* 2 = fr. 440A FHSG) offers evidence for cross-contamination of classification. Theophrastus is reported to have said

that ‘for a brief period [the soul] pays heavy fees: feelings of grief, fright, desire, jealousy’—a fourfold division that looks remarkably similar to the Stoic genera of emotion (distress, joy, anger, fear). While these classifications are not an exact match, pseudo-Plutarch seems to be giving what he knows about Theophrastus a Stoic ‘make-over’ in the vocabulary he uses, which suggests that the Peripatetic division into four categories was (perceived as) sufficiently close to make this kind of conceptual approximation possible.

In comparison Aristotle’s divisions are often more generous: at *EN* 2. 5, 110521–23 he lists ‘appetite, anger, fear, confidence, jealousy, joy, feeling friendly, hatred, longing, emulation, pity’ (cf. *EE* 2.2, 1220b12–14 and *Rhet.* 2. 1, 1378a20–23).⁵⁸ It is again very tempting to think that these divisions came into being in the competitive environment of inter-school debate. The contrast with the Stoic definition of virtue is also clear: when they call it ‘an expertise concerned with life as a whole’ (LS 61G) they emphasise the fully rational nature of virtue, and specific virtues as ‘science’ (*epistêmê*). How Theophrastus chose to arrange his key terms and focused on a particular question can thus not be fully explained from the Aristotelian treatment and would seem influenced by the contemporary discourse with the Stoics on the importance of the emotions and their classification.

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Politics

The influence of the school on the political debate is even more difficult to assess. Evidence shows up in such areas as real-life politics, drama, and everyday life. For instance, the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt had several Peripatetics as their advisors; the comedy writer Menander, a student and friend of Theophrastus and Demetrius, wrote plays with notable characters and a penchant for moral maxims which became very popular; Demetrius of Phaleron was the political leader in Athens during 317–307 BCE, enforced by a mandate from the Macedonian court of Antigonos, who had reestablished Macedonian supremacy in Athens after a few years of unrest (321–319 BCE).⁵⁹ We cannot measure the ‘impact’ of such political activities on society very accurately, because the way in which intellectual debates filtered into the spheres of everyday life is often a very subtle process. Whatever the definition of ‘impact’, it is clear that Peripatetics played a role in contemporary politics and culture. Demetrius is clearly the most prominent Peripatetic, and his sumptuary law for funerals may be counted as having impact on society.

Another example may assist in appraising how the Peripatetics could come into the public eye. Praxiphanes, a student of Theophrastus, came under fire

for the manner in which he grieved for an unknown person and how he evaluated that loss. The evidence is from Carneiscus' *Philistas* 2.1, an Epicurean work considering the death of a friend, who was considered a model Epicurean.⁶⁰ The text is a heavily damaged papyrus fragment, but we can still extract one or two relevant points from it (= part of fr. 20b MM and M61):

. . . to grieve excessively at the death of a friend because of being unable to be strong to the same extent in necessary circumstances and to help scarcely with some conceptions [. . .] he said the end (death) of a friend was a loss for himself when his friend died in other respects, which . . .

As the first few words show, the topic of discussion is the *degree* of grief (note 'excessively'), which would entail that the discussion also considers setting a limit to the display of grief. A further fragment from the same papyrus gives us more information of the dispute (fr. 20c MM and M62, trans. slightly modified):

Just as also Praxiphanes, whom one must admire, [. . .] And to me he seems to have been led astray by that and even more by not always observing concerning the aforementioned matters that false assumptions had come about in the way I had set out. For from here he goes on to think . . . to come about in general because of lies in such circumstances, which is more difficult . . .

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Despite the terrible state of the text, we can appreciate that the polemic is clearly focused on argumentative aspects, in targeting 'false assumptions' (*pseudeis hypoleipseis*), though there is a suspicion that Carneiscus' expression of 'admiration' is not wholly sincere (a touch of sarcasm?). A further brief comment confirms that Carneiscus accused him of an 'inappropriate attitude in the death of friends', and judged his discourse to be 'full of contradiction' (fr. 20c).

Platonists would of course be among the prime discussion partners of the Peripatetics. We are afforded an intriguing glimpse of the response by Carneades, head of the Academy in the mid second century BCE. Traces of his interest in Aristotelian ethics or politics have been detected in his ever so sparsely preserved speech on justice. The surviving evidence is found in Cicero's (fragmentary) *Republic*, supplemented by summaries in the Christian authors Tertullian and Lactantius.⁶³ Carneades' first speech probably set out Plato's and Aristotle's arguments in order for them to be refuted, while the 'second speech' was possibly aimed at criticising them (Lact. *Div. Inst.* 5.14.5, *Epit.* 50.8). Carneades' account emphasises that Plato and Aristotle describe justice as giving 'everyone their due', promoting 'fairness and equity (*aequitatem*) among everyone, that it is public and other-directed' unlike other virtues, and beneficial for 'the maximum possible number of people'.⁶⁴ But the

counter-arguments of Carneades do not seem particularly close to Aristotle's concerns; rather there are clear echoes from Plato's *Republic* 2–3, and only vaguely from *EN* 5. 7. As Bett plausibly suggests, his Roman audience of the second century BCE had most likely little knowledge of Aristotle's works, so Carneades may not have been able to use this speech to present a very targeted refutation.⁶⁵

A mere one and a half lines in a papyrus inform us about a Stoic attack on a Peripatetic. The Stoic Zeno of Tarsus criticised Hieronymus on his ethical views (Hieronymus fr. 24 = Philodemus *History of Stoics* in *PHerc* 1018 col. 48 Dorandi). The brief comment reads: ' . . . and five volumes *Against Hieronymus*, [which] they say are not revised'. A helpful note in White's edition informs us that this passage stands at the end of a list of works (White 2004, 145). It is worth pointing out that the hostile nature of Zeno's work has to be derived from the preposition *pros*, literally 'in the direction of' but in philosophical titles of this period it can be translated as '(aimed) against' or 'in response to' (as I mentioned above p. 130). Given that Zeno did not write very much (DL 7. 35), it is all the more surprising that he took the trouble to write five volumes (book rolls) to criticise Hieronymus. It seems to confirm Zeno's interest in ethics (cf. DL 7. 84)⁶⁶ and the importance of Hieronymus' ethical thought. What this passage does not do is resolve the question whether Hieronymus considered his writings in ethics more important than works in other areas. But clearly Zeno focused on his ethical works, since the Stoics held this subject in highest regard.

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In all these skirmishes it is apparent that Aristotle's own writings are not at the centre of debate. His successors come under attack from their contemporaries, and the discourse regularly exhibits cross-contamination of concepts and vocabulary.

(4) Responses and challenges to Aristotelian psychology

Aristotle's work *On the soul* (*De anima*) was important for articulating a theory about the soul which tried to overcome Plato's stark dualism. Aristotle's hylomorphism allowed him to speak of body and soul, but he emphasised that they were unified, making the soul the form of the body-soul compound (*De an.* 412a8, 414a14–20) and capable of receiving the form of an object (429a15). 'Form' here refers to the determining characteristic—a structure—defining in particular the function of the living being. He also preferred to speak of capacities (*dunameis*) rather than 'parts' in the soul. Nonetheless, his analysis of

the soul also evoked revision and criticism. Two aspects catch our particular attention: (a) the soul as immortal; (b) the account of emotions and affects, especially pleasure and pain.

(4a)

The problem with Aristotle's hylomorphism is that as a theory it is hard to pin down and understand in all its implications. The role of the form may well cause confusion, or present an ambiguity, as to whether it implies a materialist or a dualist position. A philosopher-physician like Galen could invoke Aristotle's authority for his own theory that psychological characteristics supervene upon or 'follow' the blends of elements in the body (even if bodies need not be identical to those blends).⁶⁷ Read in this way, the soul-body relationship comes very close to a materialist (non-Aristotelian) interpretation. The claim that soul and body are intimately connected should mean that there is little room for a dualist reading. Yet *De an.* 3.1 already noted that *nous* has no organ. And at 3.5 Aristotle still allowed the thinking part of the soul to be immortal and eternal. While the comment seems an afterthought, it does strongly suggest a separable soul part, and hence the body-soul compound can be seen as a dualist construct.

The Stoics and Epicureans saw Plato's (and Aristotle's) notion of an immortal soul as problematic and tried to eliminate it by adopting a physicalist theory of soul.⁶⁸ This is a further indication that the Aristotelian doctrine had set the 'agenda' in this issue. To the extent that Aristotelian form is not just a structure of the compound, but an active factor—a structuring principle—it looks as if Aristotle is again on the side of Platonic dualism. And as is well known, Stoic *pneuma* (clearly a body) was similarly active—a smaller version of the structuring principle of the universe. The Stoics tried to accommodate their physicalist view of the soul as a body (LS 45D) by declaring it to be vital heat (Zeno, LS 45G) or *pneuma*, 'breath' (Chrysippus). By Stoic lights, the human soul was probably held to be a mixture of air and fire (*pneuma psukhikon*) which was connected to the cosmic *logos*, a regulating force which pervades all of creation (LS 45H).

The Epicureans simply refused to accept that the soul possessed an immortal part given its material (atomist) nature (LS 14AB). With Stoic and Epicurean positions on one side and Plato and Aristotle on the other, the debate seems to turn on the basic question: which theory explains human functioning better? A material soul or an immaterial one? Clearly the first entailed mortality and the second suggested immortality (Plato certainly endorsed the latter, and Aristotle

partially). The debate seems to have lasted until the mid-second century, influencing the Peripatetic Critolaus, who apparently defined the soul's substance to be *aether* (Aëtius, *Placita* I.7.21; Tertulian, *De an.* 5).⁶⁹ Furthermore, in his biological theory Aristotle also makes use of *pneuma* (sometimes translated as 'connate or vital heat'), supposing that it will fill the arteries, starting in the semen (cf. above p. 134), and giving it a role in the generation and development of body and soul. While the Stoic notion of *pneuma* shows some similarity to Aristotle's, it has a different role and became more precisely defined as a structuring element in all things, even inanimate ones (L and S 46AD).

From these diverging responses to Aristotle's hylomorphism, we can at least conclude that its ambiguity between materialism and dualism may have offered a kind of matrix of possible positions for other schools to develop.

(4b)

A second important issue, further developed among many philosophers in the Hellenistic period, was that of pleasure and pain (or painful and unpleasant experiences, whether bodily or psychological). Its antecedents lay with the Presocratics and Hippocratic physicians, who had already attempted to give explanations for these in the context of their theories of physiology and perception. But the topic of pleasure and pain gained renewed importance in two stages. Firstly, Plato and Aristotle gave them more attention as part of their theory of human action and motivation (*Philebus*; *EN* 10. 1–4), preparing the way for the topic's central role in Hellenistic debates. Secondly, in the Hellenistic period (2a) Epicurus proposed to give it a prominent place in his philosophy (crudely put: he characterised pleasure as absence of pain or distress), and (2b) the Stoics proposed a systematic classification of emotions in a way that considered pleasure and pain to fall under two of the four main headings of the emotions (distress, joy, anger, and fear).

On the surface the core notion of Epicurean philosophy—pleasure—shows some similarity to Aristotle's account of pleasure and pain, in which only instantaneous pleasures are recognised as real (*EN* 10.4, 1174a17–23). Epicurus spoke about pleasures as 'kinetic' and 'static' in order to allow for intrinsic pleasures for activities 'that do not contain their own ends in themselves'.⁷⁰ But it is more likely that they resemble each other, because both responded to Plato. A more probable entanglement between Epicurean and Peripatetic views may be seen in the third century. We saw earlier how Plutarch mentioned Epicurus and Hieronymus of Rhodes in the same passage (Chapter 4, n. 34). On the topic of pleasure their positions were presented as similar.

The importance of the topic emerges from materials of a relatively late date, but is nonetheless clear because control over emotions was at the top of the philosophical agenda. For instance, sources from Cicero onwards attribute a thesis of painlessness to Hieronymus of Rhodes (ca. 290–ca. 230 BCE). Because most claims are found in Cicero, it is important to be aware of his comments which have dominated the scholarly assessment of the Hellenistic Lyceum, in particular the views of Lyco and Hieronymus. It is worthwhile expanding on his potentially misleading verdict.⁷¹ I will briefly review the terminology to show how difficult it is to retrieve the original Greek terms from his Latin paraphrases and translations. Fortunately, out of the dozen or so passages two cases offer clues as to the original terms.⁷²

The Greek thinkers would normally use *hêdonê* for pleasure and *ponos* for pain. Amongst the Latin fragments which contain useful information on how to diminish or eliminate pain (fr. 11–24 White), we find the verb *dolēre* and the noun *dolor* to describe both physical and mental pain. In addition, *molestia* (‘trouble, annoyance, discomfort’) is used as a species of *aegritudo* (‘pain, distress’) in Cicero, *Tusc.* 2. 15 when he discusses pain as an evil, in a passage where we can assume that the anonymous speaker represents Cicero’s own view:

So I shall speak about the weakness and divergent doctrines of many philosophers. First of these in both influence and antiquity is the Socratic Aristippus, who did not hesitate to say pain is the worst evil. Next Epicurus revealed himself to be quite susceptible to this feeble and womanly view. After him Hieronymus of Rhodes said that absence of pain is the greatest good: so much bad did he attribute to pain.

(fr. 20B)⁷³

The short list of individuals represents three different schools, but they get grouped together on account of the close similarity in their views on pain. Another passage (Cic. *De fin.* 2. 41 = fr. 20A) offers an argument as to why Hieronymus’ view is wrong: even if pain is bad, its absence is not sufficient to attain a good life. In addition, it does not follow that *not* having pain means that one will experience pleasure. Admittedly, the context is part of a critique aimed at Epicurus, but the established perception seems to be that Hieronymus’ theory on pleasure is very close to his contemporary; contrast this, for instance, with the Peripatetic Critolaus in the second century, who declared pleasure an evil (Aulus Gellius IX.5.6 = fr. 23 W.). A very probable way to think about it is to regard this as another case of terminological cross-contamination in the ongoing discourse of topical issues of the day.

The passages just discussed allow us to pair up the Latin and the Greek terms more closely: *dolor* (‘pain’) and *aegritudo* (‘ailment’) match the Greek *ponos* and

lupê respectively. This is of some importance in order to understand fully what Hieronymus of Rhodes may have had in mind. The semantic force of the two pairs is different: while *dolor* (L.) and *ponos* (Gr.) usually express a notion of hard work, *aegritudo* and *lupê* can signify both physical and mental pain ('pain, distress, grief'). This means that the second pair can be used in a wider sense and for a greater range of different experiences. 'Painlessness' will in this context refer to absence of bodily discomfort as well as mental anxiety. This latter usage is illustrated by the phrase 'living free from disturbance'.⁷⁴ But what could this mean? It must refer to the absence of mental trouble, or the 'freedom from lasting and disabling distress'⁷⁵, though this very likely also includes bodily distress.

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White has suggested we may draw on Stoic definitions to clarify this notion. His useful explanation of how Hieronymus gets portrayed as a hedonist shows how this characterisation is probably a distortion originating with the Stoics (the sources are complex here: the story may go back to Zeno's, Chrysippus', and Carneades' polemic). Plutarch's assimilation of Epicurus and Hieronymus has a different motivation.⁷⁶ In addition, Hieronymus seems to subscribe to Aristotle's analysis of anger as a mixture of pain and desire (note Hieronymus' medical analogy, fr. 25). Thus we may combine the account of anger with that of the *telos* and recognise how Hieronymus aims for a tranquil life (fr. 27 shows how Seneca describes his notion with words like *placidus*, 'calm'). Hieronymus' positions seem to stay close to Aristotle's pronouncements, so that ongoing engagement with his ethics is clear. The problem of the perceived discontinuity, as White highlights, was Chrysippus, whose fierce criticism made it look as if Peripatetic ethics had vanished.

From polemic to personal attack

Rivalry and competitiveness could also lead to more personal attacks. It is worth asking whether such altercations were the product of human weakness or whether a more serious reason lies behind it. Here polemic often slipped into invective of a less dignified nature, and could include scrutiny of the habits and lifestyle of one's opponent. We know of quite a few snide remarks and insinuations which enliven the biographical tradition and once again Diogenes Laertius is a good source for these anecdotes. I will include some of these here to illustrate how animated such debates could become. The question whether any of these accusations were effective in diminishing a thinker's thought or status cannot be answered without some speculation. No doubt the allegations led to persistent rumours, such as the supposed hedonism of Epicurus or the extravagance of the Peripatetics. The more serious point, I suggest, is that

competing philosophies espoused a particular way of life, and that it was a substantive objection to a philosophy that its proponents did not—or could not—practise what they preached.

Among the Platonists several individuals engaged in polemic and debate with philosophers outside their school. The third head of the Academy, Arcesilaus (ca. 316–240/1 BCE), was a very eloquent speaker. Philosophically he took the Academy in a new direction by emphasising the speculative side of Plato's writings and their inconclusive nature: because Plato wrote in dialogues which were often aporetic, one could easily take this approach as a deliberate tactic on Plato's part to withhold judgment. That is, according to Arcesilaus, Plato subscribed to a sceptical or non-committal position (the technical term for withholding judgement was *epochê*). This serious interpretation of Plato did not prevent others from accusing Arcesilaus of being 'fond of boys and very susceptible. Hence he was accused by Ariston of Chios, the Stoic, and his followers, who called him a corrupter of youth and a shameless teacher of immorality' (DL 4. 40–2). This last comment can easily be read as an allusion to the accusations brought against Socrates in 399 BCE, and may have become a staple accusation against older philosophers taking on young men for rhetorical training. But we should note that DL's report has more to say in what follows (4. 42 = fr. 4 White): 'The most virulent attacks were made upon him in the circle of Hieronymus the Peripatetic, whenever he collected his friends for the anniversary of Halcyoneus, the son of Antigonus.' Thus we see Arcesilaus under attack from both Stoics and Peripatetics. The last comment gives us an inkling of the hostility between Academicians and Peripatetics, and of the intensity with which such rivalry was pursued.⁷⁷ Among Hieronymus's formidable scholarly output (Chapters 1 and 4), Gottschalk has attempted to tease out some details from the sources, pointing to a work by Hieronymus entitled 'On holding back' (*peri epokhês*, fr. 54 White = fr. 24 W.). Unfortunately we are not informed about the specific content of the attacks. It is likely, as Gottschalk intimates, that this was a polemical work against his sceptical contemporary, the Academic Arcesilaus.⁷⁸ But the fragment itself offers very little to infer more about the exact nature of the exchange.

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On the basis of two unallocated fragments we can make a plausible case that Hieronymus was opposed to the sceptical stance. In one (fr. 7) he speaks about Timon of Phlius, a devotee of the sceptic Pyrrho, comparing him to Scythian archers who shoot their arrows both when attacking and fleeing (i.e. always argumentative, but ineffective, and certainly not brave). In another (fr. 32) he compares those who interrupt lectures to puppies, who bite each other at home, but fail to bite prey during the hunt; the comment evokes the point made by Plato (*Rep.* 539B) that apprentice dialecticians 'refute each other for

the sheer hell of it', a dangerous misuse of the skill. Such a choice of example could be especially effective against Arcesilaus. Several others joined Hieronymus in attacking the Academy.⁷⁹ The Peripatetic Dicaearchus criticised Plato for 'undermining philosophy' (Philod. *Acad.* 1.1–2.7 = fr. 46AC Mirhady), because he 'diverted students to a superficial form of philosophy'.⁸⁰ This comment may surprise us: our knowledge of Plato's philosophy would not bring us to use the word 'superficial'; polemics is of course not so much about truthfulness as about abuse and malevolence.

One particularly intriguing case of polemic against sceptical positions is that undertaken by the Peripatetic Aristocles of Messene (first or second century CE⁸¹), who mounted an aggressive attack on the thought of one school in his long work entitled *On Philosophy*. As his target he chose the Cyrenaics, a small philosophical movement from Cyrene (fourth century BCE), who combined elements of Socratic and sceptical thought. The Christian author Eusebius (ca. 263–ca. 340 CE) has preserved some of his arguments in short passages. The Cyrenaics focused on *pathê*, 'affections' or 'experiences', the result of undergoing the impact of an external object (but they can also refer to feelings or awareness of something) and considered only these to be 'apprehensible'.⁸² Although this seems to imply a (kind of) criterion of infallibility regarding the *pathê* as *internally* perceived experiences ('their contents are directly given to consciousness and are incorrigibly true'⁸³), their sceptical attitude towards *external* sensory impressions had major consequences for their philosophical theorising, precluding them from developing an elaborate metaphysics and physics.

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Aristocles formulated two distinctive points of attack, so far as the evidence allows us to make out.⁸⁴ Both aim to ridicule the position by extracting absurdities from the basic premises. The first argument objects to the much restricted nature of what can be apprehended (*pathê*, 'affections' only), the second focuses more on the affected subject. At *Praep. Ev.* 14.19.5–7 Eusebius lists further absurdities that follow from the basic claim (*reductio ad absurdum*): it is absurd if one does not know *where* one is (in heaven or on earth), whether certain basic knowledge (three is less than four) is true or not, and in general, that they can claim to be doing philosophy at all. Aristocles infers from these and other illogical consequences the devastating conclusion that 'they do not understand what we are talking about at this very moment' (19. 7).⁸⁵

Conclusion

The main point of this chapter was to identify the diverse ways in which other

Hellenistic schools interacted with the Peripatetics. It is clear that Aristotelian ideas had a varied impact on other thinkers, whether directly and indirectly, or whether they adopted and adapted his ideas or went against them.⁸⁶ It is also clear that other schools were not always responding to Aristotle's doctrines, but to those of his successors. While it remains a difficult question whether Aristotle's writings were widely known (and the evidence suggests they probably were not widely *read*), his theories and the ongoing teaching and revisions by his successors would have given Aristotelian concepts and theories an assured presence in Athens. But as highlighted here and in a previous chapter, Peripatetics did not always represent Aristotle accurately, even if in some areas the early successors seem to have stayed closer to his written word.

Significantly, Aristotle's legacy also showed his rivals what was possible in other ways than just doctrine: it exemplified how one could build a comprehensive philosophical system, how one could do empirical research and extract broader rules and regularities, and how one could focus on specific areas of knowledge in a way that was based on justified methods and definitions. In other words, to build a coherent philosophical system was an ambitious and novel idea, which went far beyond the grand gestures and big questions of early Greek philosophers (mostly in cosmology) and Plato's attempt at synthesising natural philosophy in his *Timaeus*. No one had reached the level of detail and scope of Aristotle's oeuvre before his time, but there were unmistakable attempts at emulation after him, especially by the Stoics. In the foregoing chapter we also saw several divergences inside the Peripatos (e.g. rejection of the fifth substance by Xenarchus), or a different material basis for his physics, which is essentially corpuscularian (by Strato, p. 38), and resembled both the atomist view of smallest particles and the Stoic view of regarding matter as consisting of elemental matter and interstitial space (*SVF* 2. 310 = L and S 45H). Strato redefined the role of space ('void') as breaking up matter, a view incompatible with Aristotle's notion of space (*Phys.* 4.6; Strato fr. 28AB). All these points contribute to the impression that philosophy was a lively and very dynamic activity in which orthodoxy is not always easy to pin down.

Yet it seems reasonable to think that a set of core doctrines may have been taken for granted or simply assumed. These would have included notions such as causes and principles, deductive reasoning, potentiality and actuality, the *pros hen* relation, hylomorphism, virtue, and *eudaimonia*. Unfortunately the surviving evidence is too incomplete to allow for firm conclusions. The materials we do have show an increasing focus on ethics and ongoing interactions with other schools to such an extent that the language of the discourse shows clear cross-contamination. On top of that, we can observe an increase in syncretistic tendencies, most notably in physics and ethics in the

In sum, this chapter has attempted to show how adversarial responses led to interesting doctrinal exchanges as well as less dignified assaults. Although the familiar limitations of the evidence prevent us from retrieving these discussions in full, Aristotle's successors clearly continued these kind of exchanges and thus left their doctrinal 'footprints' in the ongoing modes of negative and positive influence. From Theophrastus down to Critolaus we found manifest traces of polemical exchanges and personal allegations. Theophrastus' history of physics has echoes in Epicurus, both in the structure and in the review of earlier views (doxography).⁸⁷ Even if we do not always have extensive (and explicit) evidence to build on, Strato, Eudemus, Lyco, Aristo, Dicaearchus, Clitomachus, Phainias, Hieronymus, and Critolaus all occasionally engaged with the ideas and arguments of other schools. These examples demonstrate that, one way or another, Peripatetic ideas had an influence on contemporary philosophical debates. But we should not take this to mean that Aristotelian ideas were 'dominant' or a central force. With a physics that was controversial even within the school, and competing theories in ethics emerging in the late fourth and early third centuries, Peripatetics went from being significant players in an increasingly competitive environment to a less significant school of thought, even if some individual members still impressed (Critolaus). Their influence—whatever its nature or extent—began to wane as a result of the growing presence and impact of Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics. Yet their sustained engagement with their founder's doctrines would enable second century Aristotelians, especially Alexander of Aphrodisias, to pave the way for the ultimate triumph of Aristotle, who would become the most studied and hence most influential philosopher for centuries to come.

Notes

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- 1 Rephrasing the famous dictum of John Donne, *Meditation* 17: 'No man is an island'. For a vivid picture of the intellectual climate in the third century BCE see Gould 1970.
- 2 Kechagia 2011.
- 3 David Hahm 2007 is one of several scholars who have recently suggested that a transition occurred from a culture of inter-school *debate* in the second century BC to one of *commentary* on texts in the first century BC, and that this has led to bias in our sources for the former. See also Sharples' *Sourcebook* (2010 = SHARPLES) and below p. 130.
- 4 See White 2004, 390–1 and below pp. 132–4.
- 5 Sedley 1998, ch. 6.
- 6 Flashar 1983, 363; cf. Chiesara 2001, and below p. 149f.
- 7 = Aristo fr. 9, no. 14 W.

- 8 Even Sandbach (1985, 19) seems to admit some influence here. See also next note.
- 9 Sandbach 1985, 15; his overall conclusions, mostly denying influence of Aristotle on the Stoics, are exaggerated and no longer accepted. For critical reviews, see B. Inwood, *The Philosophical Review* 95.3 (1986) 470–3; D. O’Meara, *The Review of Metaphysics* 39.3 (1986) 585–6; H. M. Hime, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 107 (1987) 212–13; A.P. Bos, *Mnemosyne* 41.1/2 (1988) 170–1.
- 10 See Manning 2013.
- 11 See Introduction and [Chapter 1](#).
- 12 On the emerging culture of reading see Johnson and Parker 2009, 145 (with n. 7).
- 13 Simplicius will later define ‘hypomnematic’ works as those works of Aristotle which are intended to assist in carrying out further scrutiny of a topic (*in Cat.* 4.15–16); in his translation Chase remarks (p. 99, n. 54 to this passage) that the description is confirmed by the commentator David (‘Elias’) 114.8–14 when he mentions the separate type of writing appropriate for publication (the *syntagma*).
- 14 These examples are drawn from the brief listing in Baltussen 2003 n. 43, but see also Baltussen 2015, text to n. 26 for a more elaborate discussion. The preposition *pros* can mean both ‘against’ or, more neutrally, ‘in reaction to’, but in both senses the preposition testifies to an intellectually vibrant atmosphere of debate, in other words, of claim and counter-claim based on interpretation.
- 15 Cicero *Academica* 1. 33 (cited in Boys-Stones 2012, 224n).
- 16 Bonazzi in Sedley 2012, 333.
- 17 I am grateful to Dirk Baltzly for reminding me of this point.
- 18 I mentioned the deeply sceptical analysis of Sandbach 1985, who denied practically all knowledge of Aristotelian works among his rivals in [Chapter 4](#), p. 46. His account, although valuable in its sound analysis of the primary evidence, is no longer accepted without strong qualifications (see [Chapter 1](#), n. 9).
- 19 See above n. 10.
- 20 Sharples’ review of LS in *JHS* 1990, 200 (comment on vol. 1, 65).
- 21 See McDiarmid 1940.
- 22 Van der Eijk 2005, 131–2; Freudenthal 1995; Berryman 2002a [OSAP].
- 23 For Aristotle’s influence on Galen (and medicine more generally), see Baltussen (forthcoming) and van der Eijk 2005, 2009.
- 24 Gottschalk 2004.
- 25 See Baltussen 2000, ch. 2 and id. 2015.
- 26 I am grateful to Dirk Baltzly for discussing the issues around the positions of the different schools, thus helping improve the structure the whole section on epistemology.
- 27 But a link between Erasistratus (see p. 134) and Theophrastus is rejected by Nutton 2013, 136. Scarborough 1985, 515–17 suggests Erasistratus’ teacher was one Chrysippus of Cnidus.

- 28 Weise 1961, 74–77 exaggerates the scepticism of Theophrastus.
- 29 Baltussen 2000 ch. 3; cf. Regenbogen 1940 (p. 22, n. 21, p. 37).
- 30 Gottschalk 2004, 378–80.
- 31 Gottschalk 2004, 283–86.

- 32 See the excellent study by Griffin 2015.
- 33 Griffin 2015, ch. 4.
- 34 Griffin 2015, 111–112, referring to *Simpl. In Cat.* 21,2–5,9 (poor structure); 26,1–30,22 (definitions).
- 35 Galen here (42) usefully clarifies that they are ‘universally referred to as *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*, but that Aristotle himself ‘refers to the first book as his works “on syllogism”, and to the second as “on demonstration”’.
- 36 On Galen’s interest in, and use of, logic in medicine, see the lucid discussion in Barnes 1991.
- 37 Arist. *Topics*.
- 38 Barnes 1999, 76–77. Cf. [Chapter 3](#).
- 39 This section uses some material from Baltussen, *forthc.*–2 (Peripatos and Second Sophistic).
- 40 See Van der Eijk 2009, 261–2 for a succinct summary of Galen’s criticisms of Aristotle, and 262 ff. for the overlaps between the two.
- 41 It is mentioned briefly in Van der Eijk’s fragment edition of Diocles of Carystus (Brill: Leiden), 2001: fr. 6 van der Eijk, vol. 1, p. 9 [text] and vol. 2, pp. 11–12 [commentary]). Both authors could of course also be alluding to Plato’s argument in the *Phaedrus*.
- 42 On the role of medicine as a model method, see Jaeger 1957, 59–60. Cf. Longgrig 1998.
- 43 Barnes 1991, 55–60 gives an amusing account of what happens when one knows no logic. Galen did criticise Aristotle in a partially lost work *On Demonstration* (e.g. definition of time, theory of vision).
- 44 Oikonomopoulou 2011, 109 and n. with passages. Apuleius claims he is keen to emulate Aristotle (*Apol.* 41) as well as ‘to supply what is omitted or to correct errors in all his works’ (*Apol.* 36).
- 45 I have used Teodorsson 1989, 1990, 1996, who meticulously charts the Peripatetic elements in the work, as well as Oikonomopoulou 2011.
- 46 Oikonomopoulou 2011, 106–107.
- 47 Possibly via Posidonius: Teodorsson 1989, p. 190 (comment to 721DE). For Posidonius he refers to W. Theiler, *Posidonios. Die Fragmente II* (Berlin–New York 1982), 329.
- 48 Teodorsson (1996, 267) points to *HP* II.1.3, VI.6.2, VII.7.1, and *CP* II.16.4. Cf. Oikonomopoulou 2011, 106.
- 49 *Sophists at Dinner* 8. 354c (cf. *ibid.* 2. 60d–e and 3. 122bc). The questions go beyond what is in 3a. For knowledge of Aristotle’s *GA*, *HA*, and the spurious *Probl.*, see also Apuleius (124–170 CE) *Apologia* 36. 3–8.
- 50 On un–Aristotelian elements in his writings, see Sharples 1987, 1199–1202 (universals posterior to particulars), 1202–3 (soul as form of the complex body is perishable and not separable).
- 51 Sharples 1987, 1178.
- 52 Sharples 1987, 1203, with reference to Donini 1971.
- 53 Sharples 1987, 1207.
- 54 Sharples 1987.
- 55 See Algra et al. 1999.
- 56 See the RUSCH volumes published 1991–2015 (Appendix B), esp. Theophrastus by Fortenbaugh and Gutas, 1991; Fortenbaugh et al., 1992; Van Ophuijsen and Van Raalte, 1998.

- 57 Long 1968; compare the critique by Sandbach 1985, 24 ff.
- 58 Three passages briefly discussed in Knuutila and Sihvola 1998, 15.
- 59 See O'Sullivan's detailed study on this period of Athenian history (2009).
- 60 Matelli 2012, 83.
- 61 The text [*PHerc* 1027, coll. 5, 6 pp. 187–89 Capasso] contains gaps due to damage.
- 62 *PHerc* 1027, coll. 13–14.
- 63 Bett 1999, 22–26.
- 64 Bett 1999, 22.
- 65 Bett 1999, 24.
- 66 White 2004, 145 ad loc. White notes that 'Wehrli 32 conjectures that his work criticized Hieronymus for his ethical views'.
- 67 Galen's *That the Soul's Capacities follow the Mixtures of the Body* (*Quod animi mores*, Kühn IV) argued that the mixture of bodily components determined the soul's 'powers' (*dunameis*).
- 68 Note, however, that 'they did not restate the nature of the problem itself'; (John Rist, in his review of J.B. Gould, in *Phoenix* 2.4 (1971) 386–88 at 388.
- 69 This was the maligned fifth substance (*pemptê ousia*, *quintessentia*) Aristotle linked to the heavens, a position rejected by Theophrastus and Strato ([Chapter 2](#), p. 46).
- 70 Frede 2006, 267.
- 71 See White (2004, 389) who notes that scholars after Wilamowitz have uncritically followed Cicero.
- 72 See White 2004, 395–6.
- 73 Transl. White 2004, 139 (slightly modified).
- 74 In Greek *aochlêrôs*. It is worth pointing out that the word seems restricted to sources from the late first and second centuries CE, apart from Eusebius; I found one occurrence in Epictetus, *Sent.* V. 79 [source: TLG electronic database, full search 21.03.14 for **aochlêt-*], so that it is less likely we are looking at his own words, but rather a later rephrasing. White does not comment on this chronological disparity.
- 75 White 2004, 397–8.
- 76 White 2004, 402.
- 77 Recent interpretations have, however, argued against the existence of such fierce hostility. It may also be related to anti-Macedonian feelings (cf. Grayeff 1974, 49–50).
- 78 Whether we should accept this title or the one found in a papyrus *Peri sunokhês* (*POxy* 3656 = fr. 55 White) is not essential to the argument here (although Gottschalk 2004, 376–7 rejects the second option, proposed by Gigante).
- 79 I summarise Gottschalk's argument (2004, 376–8); the quotations are from p. 388.
- 80 White 2001, 219.
- 81 On the date see Barnes 2007, 548 ('after Aenesidemus' who is mentioned and 'before Eusebius' who provides us with these passages).
- 82 See Tsouna 1998, ch. 2 for the subtleties and pitfalls of the vocabulary.
- 83 Tsouna 1998, 53.
- 84 I base my account on Tsouna 1998, 62–70.
- 85 Critical comments did not just go one way. We find Sceptics responding to Aristotle in

several ways. Although many Greek philosophers exhibit sceptical tendencies, the followers of Pyrrho (ca. 360–ca. 270 BCE) were quite distinct from the existing fourth-century schools. They disagreed with all ‘dogmatics’ (Platonists, Peripatetics, Stoics, and Epicureans) by formulating a view that would lead to complete withholding of judgement, because they believed the strength of arguments in favour of or against a sensory impression could not be decisive for either side. The works of Sextus Empiricus (fl. c. 200 CE) are the sole extensive source for the sceptical tradition; they usually refer to Aristotle as the Peripatetic, though sometimes it may refer to other members of the school. See Bett 1995; Annas 1992.

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- 86 I am excluding here the later ‘eclectics’ like Cicero, Galen, and Ptolemy, who extracted ideas from Aristotle’s works for their own philosophical and scientific purposes.
- 87 Fr. 29–30 Usener; Sedley 1998, 184n.

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7 Epilogue

From Theophrastus to Alexander of Aphrodisias

It will be useful to end with some reflections on the Peripatetic tradition as a whole and its significant impact on later times. In this brief ‘history’ of the Peripatos I have argued that recent research on the Peripatetics puts us in a good position to give a new and more detailed account of the school and its members. The traditional story of Aristotle as the lone genius and a subsequent decline of the school rests on a particular approach to writing the history of philosophy and blankly accepts that the slender evidence for his successors is sufficient to draw broad and authoritative conclusions. To place the emphasis on ‘decline’ after Aristotle, a notion already intimated by Cicero, wrongly implies that one is entitled to expect each successor to be a ‘new Aristotle’. This is not to dispute Aristotle’s originality or wide learning. The extraordinary volume and depth of his thought succeeded in combining empirical results with a broad theoretical framework. But it is clear that these qualities had both a stimulating and a restrictive effect on the activities of his successors: stimulating because Aristotle’s explorations and insights triggered further research; restrictive because his body of work made great demands on his students and set the intellectual framework from which it was not always easy to break away.

As a result, any attempt to capture the early Peripatos and its successive stages in quick and facile generalisations easily runs into difficulties: the fragmented evidence risks misrepresenting the people and ideas associated with the school. We therefore need to remain cautious to avoid both underestimating or overstating the contributions of the successors to the school’s intellectual legacy. A major problem with assessing their contributions is not just the incomplete evidence, but also how to answer the question to what extent they accepted and took as read certain doctrines, so that they had

no need to discuss them explicitly. That the central (and sensible) concern of the early successors was to continue the work of their founder, that they saw it as their task to engage in a collaborative enterprise within the framework he had created, is shown in how they build on, elaborate, and refine the pioneering ideas of Aristotle in almost every conceivable area of research. Their focus was on consolidation, which they considered as more important than competing for novelty or originality. As Barnes put it: ‘the Peripatetics . . . built with bricks from Aristotle’s brickyard’. But he wisely adds that ‘the issues they addressed in Aristotle’s name had scarcely troubled him’. His view is that they would proffer ‘Aristotelian opinions, not Aristotle’s opinion’, with a considerable amount of ‘originality and imagination’.¹ The quotation expresses well how logic and epistemology (the particular areas Barnes is discussing here) encompassed a continuity in thought, and in many cases novel elaborations which may well stand as natural developments of Aristotle’s ideas.

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It also became clear that in quite a few areas continuity was less secure, and in some cases even absent. For this reason I raised the question of the ongoing coherence of the school from different perspectives. At several points in the book I asked how we are to understand the label ‘Peripatetic’. I have suggested that we may need to qualify our concept of allegiance and loyalty, if we take a proper understanding of a school’s practice into account: the rather loose liaison a Platonist or Peripatetic had with their peer group seemed confirmed by the ‘conversion’ stories included in the Hellenistic period. The label ‘Peripatetic’ more often than not became attached to Aristotle’s followers by those *outside* the school, and a committed group member would not feel obliged to agree in all aspects of doctrine, or even stay a member indefinitely.

Such an elastic connection to a ‘school’ does, however, raise the further question how one might define the full implications of membership. It is very well possible that the involvement with the Peripatetic school resembled committing to a kind of Kuhnian paradigm.² That is, the important tools of their philosophical thought, such as categories, *pros hen* ambiguity, the distinction between matter and form, or between potentiality and actuality, valid argument, the pursuit of happiness, *eudaimonia* (that is, in metaphysics, physics, logic, ethics), were endorsed by anyone affiliated with the Peripatos as the essential tool kit—even if they were to express dissent with Aristotle himself in the specific application of those tools on different philosophical problems. There may be no single breakthrough that all of them take as a paradigm in the Kuhnian sense (i.e. a model to be extended and emulated). However, for each Peripatetic there will be some use of these tools that they think of as a paradigm in that sense.

If we wanted to try and characterise the *whole tradition* from Theophrastus to Alexander of Aphrodisias, it is highly likely (but no longer fully traceable) that the successors' link to the school and Aristotelian thought is first and foremost built on a very limited set of doctrines which we can see survive over the centuries: we may in particular think of the pursuit of moderation rather than exclusion of the passions, the insufficiency of virtue for happiness, and a sharper distinction between the heavens and the sublunary region—these characteristic positions of the Peripatetic school throughout also give it a unified base.³ It is only when in other respects there are various points of divergence (discussed in [Chapter 5](#)) that we are forced to shed further light on why this lack of absolute unity was apparently unproblematic. Here the connection between the successors and the founder might play a role, whether by one's direct connection to a teacher ('lineage', as presented in Diogenes Laertius), one's doctrinal allegiance (individual scholarchs), or even some other form of intellectual affinity (which could lead to being labelled by others as belonging to the 'school'). The fact remains that many of the difficulties for interpreting this tradition flow from the fragmentary nature of the sources and it would seem that we cannot put this 'Peripatetic Humpty-Dumpty' back together again in a way that produces a satisfactory result. But in a number of cases we saw that the efforts to reconstruct their thought from the fragments did clarify their reactive attitude as both loyal and independent; and we saw that the debates they took part in also strongly coloured their language and their approach to the problems at issue.

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I have presented the progression of the school as characterised by the individual scholarchs, who were the leaders of their community, because that is what the extant evidence allows us to do. Over the 250 years following Aristotle's death (322–ca. 50 BCE) a range of critical comments, new proposals, and theoretical assumptions were added to the body of philosophical thought by those associated with the school. (This does not mean that an active school environment always existed.) While the technical treatises of Aristotle may not have been studied continuously, familiarity with his ideas from discussions, lectures, and oral transmission would certainly allow the first generations to use these as their point of departure. It is tempting to infer that temporal and geographical distance to Aristotle seems to translate into doctrinal distancing as well. The school's output clearly represented important aspects of Aristotle's thought as empirical, systematic, and ambitious: the initial heirs concentrated on continuing his project of charting human knowledge, working within the general set of assumptions driving Aristotelian thought, and focusing on natural science in particular. But many individual directions were taken, from which both greater detail and novelty arose, generating a wide range of works which,

despite their coherent foundations, looked rather disconnected. Theophrastus' consolidation of the corpus guaranteed continuity, and facilitated further discussion and on occasion dissent within the school. They treated it as a work in progress, much like a cathedral which takes several generations to build: the plans are known and the foundations laid out, yet the full shape, size, and detail can only be seen after much time has passed; only then is there a good possibility that a more unified and coherent edifice emerges. But the shift towards other 'genres' also marked a distinct change in the school's focus: rhetoric, biography, poetry, and religion came into focus more. For instance, Aristo of Ceos perhaps wrote lives of philosophers (cf. fr. 15). Evidence for this is found in DL 9. 5 (*Life of Heraclitus* (= Aristo fr. 23⁴), as well as in a (*Life of Epicurus* (Aristo fr. 25 = DL 2. 2), and biographical notes on Epicurus from Apollodorus, Demetrius of Magnesia, and Aristo (in this order). Of a similar category, but different in scope, was Dicaearchus' *Biography of Greece*, or a *Life of Greece*, depending on how we interpret the Greek title *Bios Hellados* (title in Suda s.v 'Dikaiarchos' and Athenaeus = fr. 7a,b; for fragments see fr. 53–77 Mirhady in Fortenbaugh and Schutrumpf 2001; much of the surviving content is found in Porphyry, Varro, and later scholia).⁵ Divergence did not always mean polemic or dissent.

That the works of Aristotle could begin to become regarded as a canon in the late first century BCE is now generally accepted: Andronicus helped to establish a corpus in *written* form out of the individual treatises brought to Rome ('collating' several essays into what he thought would make up coherent groupings under a common heading, e.g. those examining first principles [= metaphysics], nature [= physics], rhetoric, ethics, etc.). Now philosophers could proceed on the basis of an established corpus (both 'edition' and 'canon') by way of responding to, and commenting on, texts. Exegesis would now also focus on textual clarification, including detailed analysis of words, syntax, and connections between treatises. One senses a shift in what it means to make sense of Aristotle: debate about the meaning of the text is no longer informed by what the master might have said informally—at a lecture or in conversation—but now the resources available to someone interested in reading and understanding Aristotle's works were Aristotle's works. It should therefore not surprise us that it became more common to explain Aristotle *from* Aristotle, much like the Alexandrian exegesis applied to Homer: the *Homerum ex Homero* principle, with the occasional assistance of other clarifications from early associates. The text was now a shared platform, but linguistic and doctrinal explication were the shared challenge.

Commentaries reached a mature and accomplished level when Alexander of Aphrodisias wrote his detailed running commentaries on Aristotle, which

became the gold standard for explicating Aristotle. Thus the corpus had gone from a ‘work-in-progress’ under the first generations to an established canon of considerable, though not unassailable, authority. Subsequent discussion and exegesis could incorporate new problems and solutions, yet present doctrinal cohesion to the world by claiming (rightly or wrongly) a connection to the Aristotelian corpus.

The evidence for how Aristotle’s works and ideas reverberated through the following centuries is of considerable interest, but cannot be presented in detail within the scope of this book. (The newly published *Brill Companion on the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity* covers this in greater detail.⁶) For our purposes a few final comments will have to suffice to emphasise the significance of the tradition leading up to Alexander of Aphrodisias.

The fragmentary transmission of the Peripatetics between Theophrastus and Alexander was not a unique phenomenon: many philosophical writings of the Hellenistic age have been lost. We should therefore not conclude that their works suffered special neglect or misfortune. But what the materials allow us to say is that the Peripatetics were active until the first century, even if the evidence is patchy at times (see Appendix A). By the time we get to Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 150–ca. 200 CE), the evidence inside and outside the school clearly points to a reinvigorated attention to the works of Aristotle and his philosophy. Alexander’s influence in the style of interpretation and close reading form a crucial step to strengthen and firmly establish Aristotle as the most important philosopher. It is because of Alexander’s activity as a commentator and Aristotelian that ‘Peripateticism’ lasted far into the next centuries. This position of Aristotle is especially palpable in the Platonist tradition starting with Plotinus, who read both Aristotle and Alexander’s commentaries in his classes (*Life of Plot.* 14). Subsequent Platonists all continued to engage with Aristotle’s writings: his student Porphyry established Aristotle’s importance in the curriculum of the Platonist school by making the *Categories* the introductory reading, and leading Platonists like Iamblichus, Syrianus, Damascius, and Simplicius all maintained a strong interest in this and several other works. The commentator Simplicius (480–540 CE) refers over 700 times to Alexander in his commentaries on Aristotle. Thus the philosopher and the commentator became required reading for all philosophers up to the seventeenth century.

In the immediate period after the death of Alexander of Aphrodisias the evidence for *individual* Peripatetics is thin on the ground, and with the chair gone, the ‘school’ was no longer active. But Aristotle’s philosophy found wider audiences and it has become clear that with Alexander, Aristotle came back as

a central figure in philosophy and never went away. While the Peripatos lost its role in the philosophical education in Athens, Alexandria became more important for philosophical training, and Platonism became the leading school in Athens and Alexandria. During the third to the sixth centuries Aristotle became regarded as being practically synonymous with philosophy itself. The Peripatetics (esp. Alexander but also his predecessors) laid the groundwork for that development, so that by the time the school of Alexandria rose to prominence Aristotle was already *the* philosopher, even if those studying him are all Platonists.

The early medieval thinkers had already engaged with his logic: Boethius (480–524 CE) was one of the first to undertake Latin translations and paraphrases of Aristotle's logical writings. But Aristotle's works may not all have been available to many (and Greek readers were sparse in the Western empire); when they were, they also became criticised on ideological grounds (Karamanolis 2013, 2016). Initially Plato's ideas were more palatable to the Christians and the Church fathers. Yet once most of Aristotle's writings were recovered in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Aristotle was central to the whole scholastic project. The influx of further works into the west after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 increased the keen interest in, and study of, his writings. With the invention of the printing press, a first extensive collection of Aristotle's works was soon produced: between 1495–1498 the famous Venetian printer Aldus Manutius managed to bring together many of the works now available under the title *Opera Omnia Aristotelis*. The five volumes contained most of his works (except his *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*), as well as works by Theophrastus, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Porphyry, Philo, and ps. Galen (*De historia philosophia*).

It is striking how the sixteenth-century scholar Gabriel Harvey (1552/3–1631⁷) felt a need to go up against Aristotle. In his own words: 'Mi chefirst positions against Aristotles philosophi have bene thes, or the like: (1) *Mundus non est aeternus*; (2) *Cælum non est quintae naturae*; (3) *Cælum non est animatum*; (4) *Nihil est phusikôs infinitum potentia*; (5) *Virtus non est in nostra potestate*.'⁸ This succinct list of his disagreements with Aristotle represents a set of ideas which had been disputed during the Peripatetic tradition in antiquity and after: 'the world is not eternal; the heaven is not (made) of a fifth element; the heaven is not a living being; nothing is naturally of infinite power; virtue is not within our power'. The first three stand out because they concern important issues which were already raised in the generations immediate following Aristotle and remained debated for a very long time. That 'the world is not eternal' became a hotly debated issue between Plato (created and therefore perishable) and Aristotle (uncreated and therefore imperishable). As we saw, Aristotle's position was defended by Theophrastus (fr. 184 FHSG) and Critolaus (fr. 13 W.) against the Stoics. It had remained a much debated problem in cosmology all the way up to the late Platonists and Christians in the sixth century CE, famously in a

heated exchange between Philoponus and Simplicius.⁹ Clearly Harvey was not afraid to admit his opposition to Aristotle. He was well known for his non-conformist views at the time. But his justification for disagreement is of interest as well, showing the new spirit of his time, when intellectuals were beginning to turn against medieval scholasticism.

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Harvey's position, though still at odds with the powerful scholastic movement which was strongly influenced by Aristotle, is symptomatic of the impending changes in the early modern period, when the new discoveries in science and the explorations upset some of the established systems of thought, in cosmology, medicine, and natural philosophy. But it was not until the seventeenth century that European thinkers found ways to move beyond the main tenets of the Aristotelian doctrine. It was clearly not easy (or desirable) to escape his penetrating thought, his comprehensive and systematic outlook, and his encyclopedic ambition to comprehend the natural world based on clearly defined and well-founded principles. Charles Schmitt's verdict in his conclusion about defining the term 'Aristotelianism' applies as much to the ancient and the early modern tradition: 'it is most difficult indeed to isolate a set of characteristics to link all figures who have been described as 'Aristotelian' throughout history.'¹⁰ From our modern standpoint it is now hard to imagine the history of philosophy and philosophical ideas without Aristotle. By studying the Peripatetics from Theophrastus to Alexander we are better placed to understand how they paved the way for this monumental impact of Aristotelian thought.

Notes

- 1 Barnes 2007, 547.
- 2 I am very grateful to Dirk Baltzly for discussion of this question and for his suggestion that a Kuhnian paradigm could be a useful way to think about this question.
- 3 With thanks to the late Robert Sharples (†2010) in clarifying the issues discussed in this section.
- 4 Title from Sotion, ca. 200–170 BCE, a Hellenistic doxographer and biographer used by DL; wrote a work entitled *Diadochai* ("Successions"), partly based on Theophrastus' doxography.
- 5 Apparently he offered a developmental account of humanity, which finds a partial parallel in Aristotle's *Politics* 1. 8. Thus Schutrumpf in Fortenbaugh and Schutrumpf 2001, 276–77 (in German).

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- 6 For the reception of Aristotle see now Falcon 2016 (regrettably its appearance in March 2016 did not allow me to peruse this important book or benefit from its rich contents because of the manuscript's deadline).
- 7 Harvey was a fellow of Trinity Hall, professor of Greek, university praelector in rhetoric, and friend of the poet Spenser (Scott-Warren 2004). He was a learned man but also overly ambitious.
- 8 Scott 1884, 10 (from G. Harvey, 'Letter to John Young, Master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge', MS. Sloane 93, fol. 6a). See also next n.
- 9 See Hoffmann 1987, Sorabji 2010.
- 10 Schmitt 1983, 217.

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Appendix A

Known Peripatetics 322 BCE–250 CE

Chronological list: known scholars are in bold¹

Stage 1: 322–ca. 100 BCE

- [1] **Theophrastus** (356–277/8 BCE):
scholarch from 322 (†Aristotle) until
his death.
- [2] Nicomachus (ca. 325): son of Aristotle
and student of Theophrastus (DL 5.
39).
- [3] Plato the Peripatetic (DL 3. 109),
unknown except for this brief
mention.
- [4] **Strato of Lampsacus** (–268):
successor to Theophrastus; nicknamed
the ‘natural philosopher’.
- [5] Eudemus of Rhodes (–275):
contemporary of Theophrastus and
competitor for the role of scholarch
(Aulus Gellius, *Noct. Att.* 13. 5 =[fr.
★11 Stork]). Returned to Rhodes to
teach there and wrote mostly on
physics and (history of) science.
- [6] Aristoxenus of Tarentum, also in the

- running for the succession; known for studies in music. According to the Suda s.v. he spoke out against Aristotle for not being elected his successor (other sources contradict this, e.g. Aristocles *ap. Eus. Praep. Evang.* 14. 18).
- [7] Praxiphanes of Mytilene (ca. 322 BCE): student of Theophrastus.
- [8] *Metrocles the Peripatetic (DL 6. 94–5): student of Theophrastus; changed to cynicism.
- [9] Duris of Samos (ca. 340–ca. 260 BCE), student of Theophrastus.
- [10] Phanias/Phainias (late fourth/early third century BCE) student of Theophrastus.
- [11] **Lyco of Troas**, fourth head from 269; d. 254. Known for his educational interest.
- [12] **Aristo of Ceos**, fifth(?) head (ca. 254–). His collection of Peripatetic wills a probable source for DL 5 (given the chronological scope up to Heracleides).
- [13] **Demetrius of Phalerum** (?–282 BCE). Politician who actively rules Athens under the protection of Macedon until overthrown (317–307 BCE). Major study: O’Sullivan 2009.
- p.166
- [14] Dicaearchus (–275): first generation Peripatetic; wrote *Life of Greece*. Other work shows a keen interest in questions regarding the mind and psychology (see Caston 2012).
- [15] **Hieronimus of Rhodes** (?–ca. 275 BCE). Called the Peripatetic in D.L. 4.42; Clement of Alexandria (fr. 12 White). Wrote mostly on ethics, literary topics and education (for a list see fr. 8A White).

- [16] ★Aristophanes the Peripatetic (n.d.): Hieronymus fr. 55 White = Anon. POxy. 3656.11–18 (t. 52 p. 49 Parsons) [about an anonymous student of Plato] ‘ . . . (12) Aristophanes | the Peripatetic | reports likewise | in his *On | Painlessness (peri alupias)* . . . ’.
- [17] Agatarchides (ca. 200–150 BCE). Called ‘the Peripatetic’ by Strabo (14.2.15, p. 656) (after Schorn 2003, 46).
- [18] Klearchos of Soli (Cyprus): called ‘dining fellow’ (*trechedeipnos*, Athen. i. 4a); he wrote biography (Athen. xii. 543); an *enkomion* on Plato (DL 3. 2); a work on flattery, Athen. vi. 255; on education (DL 1. 9, with a comment on the Magi repeated in Josephus; Athen. xv. 697e); paintings xiv. 648f.; on sleep, Clement Alex. i.15. He is mentioned in an anecdote by Josephus *Contra Apionem* 1.22 (fr. 6 W.), but its historicity is disputed.
- [19] Chamaeleon (ca. 350–275 BCE): wrote works on lyrical, comic, and tragic poets, (Athenaeus ix. 374, xiv.628); he accused Heraclides of having stolen his work on Hesiod and Homer (D.L. 5.92) (cf. Mansfeld 1994, 180 n. 323). See now Martano, Martelli, and Mirhady 2012 for the extant fragments.
- [20] Satyrus of Kallatis (late third century BCE?): called a ‘Peripatetic’ by Athenaeus vi. 248; xii. 541; xiii. 556; biographer and historian (who freely and unreliably extracted anecdotes from the material [cf. Mansfeld, 1994: 180 n. 323]); place of origin known from PHerc. 558; a fragment of his biography of Euripides is preserved in a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus in Egypt (A. S. Hunt 1912, *Oxyrrhynchi Papyri*. (London: Egypt Exploration Society), vol. 9, no. 1176, 124–182). See the major study by Schorn 2004.

- [21] **Critolaus:** ninth(?) head, member of famous delegation to Rome in 155 BCE; known students: Didodorus, Calliphon, Aristo the Younger.
- [22] **Diodorus of Tyre** (late second century BCE): student of Critolaus whom he succeeded 118 BCE; cf. Cicero, *de Oratore*, i. 11, *Tusculanae Disp.* 5. 30, *de Finibus*, II. 6, 11, IV. 18, v. 5, 8, 25, *Academica*, II. 42; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, I, ii

Stage 2: ca. 100 BCE–ca. 100 CE

- [23] **Andronicus of Rhodes** (first century BC): called ‘the Peripatetic’ by Galen (e.g. *Quod animi mores* 4.782 K.). In some accounts he is the eleventh successor to Aristotle as head of the Peripatos (Ammonius *in de Interpr.* 5, 28–29; this tradition is regarded suspect, because it clashes with another comment in the same source at Ammonius, *In APr.* 31.12–13) and the exact count of scholarchs is difficult to align with our evidence, since there is a gap between no. 4 (Lyco, ca. 274–225 BC) and no. 8 (Critolaus, ca. 155 BC—established by counting back from Andronicus), before Diodorus (?) and Andronicus.

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- [24] **Boethus of Sidon:** student of Andronicus; wrote comments on the *Categories* (Simplicius, *in Cat.* 1.18; 13.15–17; 30.2; Philoponus, *In Cat.* 5.18–19).
- [25] **Staseas of Naples** (ca. 120–?): called ‘a Peripatetic’ by Cicero (*De orat.* 1. 104) who apparently stayed with Cicero at his house (*De fin.* 5. 8 = 1D

- SHARPLES) (see Moraux I 1973, 217; Schorn 2003, 43).
- [26] Xenarchus of Seleucia: Teacher of Strabo (Strabo 64 BC–24 CE).
Fragments preserved in later Platonists (fr. collected and clarified by Falcon 2012).
- [27] *Apellicon of Teos (first century BCE):
A very wealthy man and amateur philosopher and book collector.
Athenaeus reports that he bought the works and library of Aristotle & Theophrastus (Athenaeus *Deipn.* V.214d, but cf. *ibid.* i.3a) and describes him (sarcastically) as a ‘Peripatetic philosopher’ (*epphilosophei ta peripatētika*). Some sources ascribe to him a biography of Aristotle, in which he refuted the negative assessments of other biographers (Strabo, xiii. 1.54; Plutarch, *Sulla*, 26). Died ca. 84 BCE.
- [28] *Athenion: politician in Athens and contemporary of Apellicon, who served under him as army captain (in a disastrous campaign to Delos) and mint master at some point; said to be ‘of the same sect’ (*hairesis*) as Apellicon, but rather unprincipled by not practising the doctrine consistently when in charge of Athens (Athen. *Deipn.* v.214d–e).
- [29] **Cratippus of Pergamum** (first century BCE) (Schorn 2003, 43):
according to Cicero ‘easily the best among Peripatetics I have heard’ (*Tim.* 1).
- [30] (Areus) Didymus (second half first century BCE): (?) court philosopher of emperor Augustus [N.B. if the same as Arius Didymus, he may be a Stoic, see SHARPLES 2010, 21–22].
- [31] Nicolaus of Damascus (ca. 66 BC–ca. 20 CE): polymath and court philosopher of Herod the Great (*FGrH*

90F135 Jacoby) and Augustus (late in his life). Wrote many works, comedies, tragedies and a *Universal History*.

Known for *Study of Aristotle's*

Metaphysics (noted in some MSS at end of Theophr. *Metaph.* 12a4–b4) (see Sharples 2010: 15f.) See also Simpl. *In cael.* 1.1–4, p. 3, 28–30 [transl.

Hankinson n.15]: Simpl. mentions him several times, once as ‘Nicholas the Peripatetic’ at *in Cael.* 398,36ff. as the author of the treatise *On the Philosophy of Aristotle* (fragments preserved in Syriac ed. Drossaart Lulofs 1969); and elsewhere (*in Phys.* 23,14ff.; 25,1ff.; 151,20) in connection with a work entitled *On the Gods*. He also wrote a biography of Augustus (Malitz 2003).

[32]

Alexander of Aegae (Suda s.v. = A 1128) Peripatetic philosopher at the court of Nero (mid-first century CE).²

Stage 3: ca. 100–ca. 220 CE

[33]

★Ammonius the Peripatetic or Ammonius of Athens: probably the teacher of Plutarch of Athens (Plut. *Symp.* III.1). Cf. Athen. xi. 476f. Philostratus speaks of ‘Ammonius the Peripatetic’ at *Lives of the Sophists* 2 §27: ‘Hippodromus, among those who ranked after Alexander the Cappadocian as blessed with a good memory, learned more by heart than any of the Greeks, and he was the most widely read, with the exception, that is, of Ammonius the Peripatetic; for a more erudite man than Ammonius I have never known.’

[34]

Adrastus of Aphrodisias: first half of

second century CE (perhaps the same person as Adrastus of Philippi mentioned by Stephanus of Byzantium; see *FGrH* 7 1999, 51); wrote on arrangement of the works of Aristotle, which is mentioned in *Simpl. in Cat.* 16.1 & 12; 18.16; *in Phys.* 6.5; by Galen in his treatise on the *Cat.* [Mansfeld 1994, 129 n. 231]; Porphyry quotes his *Timaeus* commentary and work on harmonics, *Commentary on Harmonics of Ptolemy* 7.22; cf. Barker 1989, 210; mentioned by Themistius *Paraphrase of Aristotle's Physics* 48.14; Proclus *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* 170.6, 171.4, 187.17, 192.26. See also Fortenbaugh 2011, 237 with n. 11; *id.* 749 (five books on *History and Style in the On Dispositions of Theophr.* = fr. 437 FHSG).

[35]

Aspasius the Peripatetic (first half of second century CE): 'among the exegetes of Aristotle' (*Simpl. in Ph.* 131.14); wrote commentaries on ethics, metaphysics, physics, physiology, the heavens, logic (*Categories*, *On Interpr.*). One of his students taught Galen ca. 144 CE (see *On the Affections of the Soul* 8 and Barnes 1999, 1–3). Mentioned 28 times by the Platonist Simplicius (ca. 480–540 CE) in his commentaries on Aristotle [TLG-E online search Dec. 2012].

[36]

Aristocles of Messene (first/second century CE?): mistakenly regarded as teacher of Alexander of Aphrodisias [Gottschalk 2003, 726]; according to the *Suda* s.v. he wrote on literary and ethical topics, and a work *On philosophy* in ten vols, parts of which are preserved in Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica*, books xiv and xv. See Tsouna 1998, ch. 5, 62–72, 151–54; Karamanolis 2006, 37; Barnes 2007, 548 ff.; Chiesara 2001.

- [37] Sosigenes: Teacher of Alexander of Aphrodisias; ca. 120–180/190 CE.
- [38] Herminus: Teacher of Alexander of Aphrodisias; ca. 120–180/190 CE.
- [39] Ptolemy: third quarter of second century CE.
- [40] ★Aristocles of Pergamon (150–180 CE): ‘belonged to a family of consular rank, and though from boyhood to early manhood he had devoted himself to the teachings of the Peripatetic school, he went over entirely to the sophists’ (Philostratus, *Lives of Sophists* ii.2, 566).
- [41] ★Anon. (late second century CE) wrote a *Comm. on Nicomachean Ethics* 2–5.
- [42] Eudemus (late second century CE): teacher of Flavius Boethus, mentioned by Galen (*De praeotione* 14, 612.12 K.) as a Peripatetic in Rome.
- [43] Alexander of Damascus (late second century CE): teacher of Flavius Boethus, mentioned by Galen (*De anat. admin.* 2.218 K. = CMG V.8.1, 96.5–98.11 Nutton = 14L SHARPLES); confused with Alexander of Aphrodisias by Galen himself (Sharples 1987, 1179 with n. 21).
- [44] Flavius Boethus (late second century CE): mentioned by Galen (e.g. *De anatom. administr.* 2, 215.5 K.) as an important Roman aristocrat with great interest in Aristotle (*De praeotione* 14, 626.1 K.; 627.1 K.). See also Johnson 2010, 78–79.
- [45] ★Claudius Severus (late second century CE): teacher of Marcus Aurelius (*Eis heauton* 1. 14).
- [46] **Aristotle of Mytilene** (mid–late second century CE): Teacher of Alexander of Aphrodisias; died

between 165 and 180 CE. (Galen *On Habits* 11.4–12 Müller = fr. 1.Z SHARPLES).

[47]

Alexander of Aphrodisias (ca. 150–ca. 230) (late second to early third century CE): often referred to as ‘the commentator’; appointed to the chair (*thronos*) of Peripatetic philosophy at Athens between 198 and 211 CE, Alexander is the dominant commentator in this era; many of his works were used by subsequent interpreters of Aristotle from Plotinus to philosophical commentators up to Simplicius (early sixth century CE) and beyond (see Sharples 1987 and Baltussen forthcoming).

Notes

- 1 The list is based on SHARPLES 2010, 503–4, id. 2010, and Schorn 2003; I have added 8, 16, 27, 28, 33, 40, 41, 45 [marked with *]. I have included those Peripatetics who are given the label in the sources. N.B. Aristotle is strictly speaking not a Peripatetic. Chiesara 2001: xv points out that Elias *In cat.* 128.10–13 knew of ‘several namesakes of Aristotle in his days and after him’.
- 2 Moraux believed that Aristotle of Mytilene (see below, Stage 3) was his teacher (Moraux 1967), but this claim was rejected by Thillet 1984, xix–xxxi.

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Appendix B

The Peripatetics after Aristotle: new editions, commentaries and discussions

(1) Brill commentaries on Theophrastus of Eresus

- 1995: Sharples, R. W. *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence. Commentary vol. 5: Sources on **Biology*** (Human Physiology, Living Creatures, Botany: Texts 328–435). (Leiden: E. J. Brill).
- 1998: Sharples, R. W. *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence. Commentary vol. 3.1: Sources on **Physics*** (Texts 137–223). (Leiden: E. J. Brill).
- 2005: Fortenbaugh, W. W. *Theophrastus of Eresus. Commentary vol. 8. Sources on **Rhetoric and Poetics***. With contributions on the Arabic material by Dimitri Gutas. (Leiden: E. J. Brill).
- 2007: Huby, P. M. and D. Gutas (eds). *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence. Commentary vol. 2: **Logic*** (Texts 68–136). (Leiden: E. J. Brill).
- 2008: Huby, P. M. *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence. Commentary vol. 4: Sources on **Psychology*** (Texts 265–327). (Leiden: E. J. Brill).
- 2011: Fortenbaugh, W. W. *Theophrastus of Eresus. Commentary vol. 6.1. Commentary on **Ethics***. With contributions on the Arabic material by Dimitri Gutas. (Leiden: E. J. Brill).
- 2014: Fortenbaugh, W. W. *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence. Commentary vol. 9.2. Sources on **Discoveries and Beginnings, Proverbs et al.*** (Texts 727–741). Contributions on the Arabic

material by Dimitri Gutas. (Leiden: E. J. Brill).

Forthcoming: Baltussen, H. and P. M. Huby (eds). *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence. Commentary* vol. **3.1.1 (Huby): Metaphysics. Vol. 3.1.2 (Baltussen): Fragments in Physical Doxography** (Texts 225–245). With contributions on the Arabic material by Dimitri Gutas. (Leiden: E. J. Brill).

Forthcoming. Schorn, S. *Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence. Commentary* vol. 6.2: **Fragments on Religion**. (Leiden: E. J. Brill).

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(2) Rutgers University Studies in the Classical Humanities

- I. Fortenbaugh, W. W. (ed.) **1983**. *On Stoic and Peripatetic Ethics: The Work of Arius Didymus* (New Brunswick and Oxford).
- II. Fortenbaugh, W. W. (ed.) **1985**. *Theophrastus of Eresus. On his Life and Work* (New Brunswick and Oxford).
- III. Fortenbaugh, W. W. (ed.) **1988**. *Theophrastean Studies. On Natural Science, Physics and Metaphysics, Ethics, Religion, and Rhetoric* (New Brunswick and Oxford).
- IV. Fortenbaugh, W. W. and P. Steinmetz (eds). **1989**. *Cicero's Knowledge of the Peripatos* (New Brunswick and London).
- V. Fortenbaugh, W. W. and D. Gutas (eds). **1992**. *Theophrastus: His Psychological, Doxographical and Scientific Writings* (New Brunswick and London).
- VI. Fortenbaugh, W. W. and D. Mirhady (eds). **1994**. *Peripatetic Rhetoric After Aristotle* (New Brunswick and London).
- VII. Ayres, L. (ed.) **1995**. *The Passionate Intellect: Essays on the Transformation of Classical Traditions: Presented to Professor I.G. Kidd*. (New Brunswick and

- London).
- VIII. Ophuijsen, J. van and M. van Raalte (eds). **1998**. *Theophrastus. Reappraising the Sources* (New Brunswick and London).
- IX. Fortenbaugh, W. W. and E. Schutrumpf (eds). **1999**. *Demetrius of Phalerum. Text, Translation and Discussion* (New Brunswick and London).
- X. Fortenbaugh, W. W. and E. Schutrumpf **2001**. *Dicaearchus of Messana. Text, Translation and Discussion* (New Brunswick and London).
- XI. Bodnár, I. and W. W. Fortenbaugh (eds). **1997**. *Eudemus of Rhodes*. (New Brunswick and London).
- XII. Fortenbaugh, W. W. and S. White (eds). **2004**. *Lyco of Troas and Hieronymus of Rhodes. Text, Translation and Discussion* (New Brunswick and London).
- XIII. Fortenbaugh, W. W. and S. White (eds). **2006**. *Aristo of Ceos. Text, Translation and Discussion* (New Brunswick and London).
- XIV. Schutrumpf, E. (ed.) **2008**. *Heraclides of Pontus. Text and Translations* (New Brunswick and London).
- XV. Fortenbaugh, W. W. and E. Pender (eds). **2009**. *Heraclides of Pontus. 2: Discussion* (New Brunswick and London).
- XVI. Desclos, M. -L. and W. W. Fortenbaugh (eds). **2010**. *Strato of Lampsacus. Text* [ed. R.W. Sharples], *Translation and Discussion*. (New Brunswick and London).
- XVII. Huffmann, C. A. (ed.). **2011**. *Aristoxenus of Tarentum. Discussion* (New Brunswick and London).

- XVIII. Martano, A., E. Martelli and D. Mirhady (eds). **2012.** *Praxiphanes of Mytiline and Chamaeleon of Heraclea* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books). [= MM and M]
- XIX. Hellmann, O. and D. Mirhady (eds). **2015. Phaenias of Eresus.** *Text, Translation and Discussion* (New Brunswick and London).
- XX. Spinelli, E., R. Chiaradonna and T. Dorandi (eds). (forthcoming) *Eudemus of Rhodes. Text [ed. by P. Stork], Translation and Discussion* (New Brunswick and London).

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